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JESSY.



A TALE.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

JESSY;

OR, THE

ROSE OF DONALD'S COTTAGE.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BRAVO OF BOHEMIA, &c.

'Tis Nature's most inviolable law,
To make each species propagate its kind:
The generous offspring from the generous stock
Derive the virtues, and confess the sire.

HIGGON.

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JESSY.

CHAPTER I.

JESSY's more comprehensive mind already taught her to believe much might depend upon her own exertions, and that it was a duty she owed the parent whose happiness she might promote by a knowledge of her own existence. She remembered (for terror had indelibly impressed every word of lord Malcolm's upon her memory) that the name of Ainsley had been more than once repeated during her stay in his lordship's chamber; neither was the reference to

Leopold unnoticed; he doubtless knew to whom his lord alluded, and could probably give her some information of a character become so important to her cause, for to a friend of that name she had been consigned by her unhappy parents; but fearful lest her own eagerness to trace these lost relatives should be construed into mere mercenary motives of ambition, she determined at least to wait the event of that decision, so anxiously anticipated by lady Madeline, respecting lord Malcolm, before she ventured to name the happy suggestion from which she so fondly hoped a successful issue.

A few hours, however, served to convince lady Madeline that years of existence, still more miserable than those he had dragged through, might yet remain to her father, but that his reason too assuredly would return no more; for the physicians had unanimously given it as their opinion that the derangement was of a nature that left nothing for either
their

their skill or practice to effect; it appeared to have been decidedly the result of some sudden shock, but of what description they were utterly at a loss to define, since no one could give them a clue. The only consolation to be derived from this information was his lordship's insanity being pronounced of that passive kind, which would render neither confinement nor violence requisite; on the contrary, both were strictly forbidden, as tending rather to increase than remove the malady, which was of a hopeless nature.

“It is therefore from the affectionate attention of such a nurse as your ladyship,” said one of the physicians, “or any one to whom he is most attached, that we must look for any advantage our patient may gain; since, unless any material change takes place, of which at present we have not the smallest prospect, our attendance can be of little service to his lordship.”

Lady Madeline heard, with painful regret, a sentence that threatened to militate so much against the interest of Jessy, whom she more than ever ardently desired publicly to acknowledge as her niece. To herself it promised a succession of unhappiness, from leaving her more than ever at a loss how to act with regard to her son, and a thousand times she repented having delayed so long her fixed determination of ascertaining lord Malcolm's intentions respecting Frederick. There was now a delicacy in bringing him forward as her son; but a determination to break through the fancied power of Leopold over them both urged her doing so: she knew not, nor surmised, that soul-rending remorse was shortening the period of an existence no longer cheered by the delusive prospect of inspiring her with love. Thus, incapable of daily witnessing the victim of his treachery, the heart-stricken Leopold had determined
his

his own fate from that moment in which the physicians had pronounced his lord's.

Frederick now seldom saw him—lady Madeline never but when she visited her father's room, where, a far more pitiable object than lord Malcolm, she could not but feel interested for him; for of his own sufferings she knew his lordship was insensible, while his distracted servant watched every movement with a fixed despair, which proved how deeply he participated in the misfortunes which had befallen his lord, whose situation, as the physicians had pronounced would be the case, more resembled a state of idiotism than madness. Amusements of the most trivial kind appeared to afford him the greatest pleasure, and the once restless desire of having Leopold always near him, and upon all occasions, had gradually declined; he rarely, if ever, repeated his name, and was at last altogether unconscious of his attendance. But as he grew daily more indifferent to his ill-

fated servant, the presence of Jessy became more agreeable to him, only as the imbecility of his mind had placed her in the light of a childish companion.

From the moment she had been taught to consider as probable his being the father of her unfortunate parent, a more powerful sense of duty had actuated her, and a desire to contribute in every way to his gratification would have overcome every personal terror, even had his features retained that cast of asperity which had so often appalled her; but the stern brow had relaxed its once harsh aspect, and the forbidding frown was superseded by the vacant smile, which excited no other sentiment than sympathy for the sufferer. Happy, therefore, in believing her presence gave him pleasure, she passed hours in his miserable apartment, from which every other resident of the castle, not excepting lady Madeline, gladly retired whenever they could do so; and Leopold marked, with a no less melancholy

melancholy satisfaction, his lordship's growing predilection for her, than the affectionate attention with which she humoured the thousand instances of caprice so incident to his situation. A conviction that there would remain some kindly-interested being, who would supply his place, was alone requisite to fix the data of his just sorrow, and his fondest wishes could not have selected one more desirable; he even regarded it as an interposition of Providence, to lighten the anguish of his guilty heart, and gratefully acknowledged it as such.

Jessy, ever meditating on her mysterious destiny, and dwelling, with the sanguine expectation of her age, on the probability of easily tracing Mr. Ainsley, had once ventured to ask the disconsolate Leopold if he was not a friend of lord Malcolm's? But the buoyant hope which had prepared her only for an affirmative was crushed by the answer, which amounted only to a belief

that he was an acquaintance of his lordship's some years ago.

Jessy would have asked—"Was he a resident in Scotland?" trusting that Leopold would be more communicative on her second question; but, either to evade a farther interrogation, or from some other cause, Leopold, without appearing to notice that she had again spoken, quitted the room, and Jessy was left to commune with her own heart on the most probable means of discovering if the Mr. Ainsley, of whom lord Malcolm had spoken more than once during her first visit to him, had any knowledge of her lost parents, in which case there could be no difficulty in tracing her own origin. She could have suggested to lady Madeline the idea that among lord Malcolm's papers there might be found letters which would lead to that gentleman's address; but her natural delicacy of feeling forbade her doing so; and weeks of painful suspense rolled onward, cheered
only

only by a sense that whether she was performing the duty of a relation, or Christian only, she was enabled to mitigate the sufferings of a fellow-creature, and as such felt happy ; and the lapse of time was to her far less tedious than it had become to the fell destroyer of lord Malcolm's reason.

Lady Madeline had, by acknowledging him, confirmed the belief every one had previously entertained—that of Frederick being her son; she had invested him with full authority to act as such in lord Malcolm's household, and from the high estimation in which every one held him, every domestic joyfully admitted his claim, though some silently condemned such parts of his conduct as had come within their knowledge while in the neighbourhood of Dunwarden Castle ; but there were not wanting some among them, who believing it would be to their interest to obtain favour in the sight of their

future lord, studiously marked the steps to be adopted for that purpose.

Sinclair, not less provident in scrutinizing every character in his lordship's clan, did not long remain ignorant of those best suited to *his* purpose, or most willing to embark in his cause; and while these interested adherents daily increased, he became more and more indifferent to the unceasing complaints and self-reproaches of the penitent Leopold, who, though he despised Sinclair as the instrument of his destruction, or more bitterly accused himself for the part he had taken, could he have known with what interest his enemy was meditating how he might best remove him from his lordship's person without raising suspicions of the purpose, he would have surveyed less calmly the awful moment which was to complete the misery he had brought upon his injured lord, by resigning him wholly to the power
of

of an interested tyrant, whose authority no one would dare to dispute, and who had too long practised dissimulation not to be sufficiently guarded in his conduct to conceal the only vengeance he had power to take on the helpless maniac who stood between him and the proud honours he so vainly coveted; but without one pretension to the character of either a just or virtuous man, he was ambitious of being considered both in the eyes of the multitude, and he determined that humanity should become a leading trait, until he had superseded the man whose known fidelity had left him the undisputed management of the insane lord Malcolm.

For this purpose he entreated lady Madeline's permission to visit his lordship, too well knowing he had only to entreat when he had a point to carry. Leopold involuntarily shuddered as he entered the apartment; but the well-feigned agitation—the affectionate com-

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mendation

mendation bestowed on Jessy, whom he found with his lordship, for her unwearyed assiduity to his grandfather—and the anxious desire he expressed to become a partaker in her humane employment, once more effectually deceived those on whom he had too often practised his deceptive powers.

Leopold thought the sight which now presented itself was alone wanting to awaken contrition for his guilty error. A stranger to his lordship, and unattached—even prejudiced against him, it was not possible he could ever know the horrors to which he was doomed; but he did not think it possible he could behold his venerable relative, deprived of the noblest faculty, reason—negligent of his person—indifferent to every object around him, save as they contributed to his infantine amusements, and not bitterly reproach himself as the unnatural cause: it could not fail to awaken commiseration, and he who had been so
active

active in the work of ruin might be induced to cherish and comfort the wretched victim of his successful treachery. Kindness and attention was now all that lord Malcolm required from those near him, and it was to him of little consequence by whom administered, for all but Jessy were alike indifferent to him: in her shortest absence he was restless, but appeared sensible of no other name. It was the last sense of misery which could reach the devoted Leopold: every effort to restore the blessing of which he had robbed him was ineffectual; he could no longer contribute to his comfort by diligence or solicitude, for he was no longer capable of distinguishing his once highly-valued domestic, and Leopold had no farther business with life.

Another interview with Sinclair was become requisite, and the weary heart, about to lay down its burthen of misery, painfully reverted to the first which had
taken

taken place between them : then but one false step—one deviation from duty, had cast a shade upon a life of rectitude ; but how many had followed ! From the retrospect he shrunk appalled. Yet a few hours, and memory, tenacious memory, would be pained no more—the oblivious sleep he anticipated would teem with no distressing dreams, like those which now harassed his restless pillow—“ But that sleep,” whispered the accusing angel, “ must have a termination. When the last trumpet shall have sounded, and the grave has given up its dead—when he, who with seraphic voice would have said, ‘ Welcome, thou good and faithful servant, to realms of bliss ! ’ shall pronounce the awful doom of ingratitude and self-murder, how will Leopold abide his wrath ? ”

Too clearly he saw the fearful abyss on the brink of which he stood, but despair had closed every chance of retreat ; it remained only to prove how far Sinclair’s
mind,

mind, impressed by the melancholy visit, was become capable of reform, to urge the necessity of his doing justice to the daughter of his uncle (for such he solemnly protested he believed Jessy to be), and to entreat him, by a future life of sincere repentance and virtuous conduct, to avoid the misery which awaited him. As solemnly would he have committed lord Malcolm to his care; but, prepared as Frederick was for this interview—egregiously as he had imposed upon the credulous Leopold by assurances of contrition he had never felt, promises of justice he never meant to perform, and affection for his lordship to which he was a stranger, a lingering doubt he could not dispel—a painful dread that all would not be as it should, restrained the impulse: he knew the sincerity of his own penitence, and ardently wished to believe Frederick's not less sincere; but even this last consolation was denied him, since his own
heart

heart rejected a conviction which, could he have realized, would have carried peace to his grief-worn soul in its last dreadful extremity.

At the period when Jessy importuned him respecting Mr. Ainsley, he dared not entrust her with what he was so well satisfied himself—that Mr. Ainsley's friendship for his lord well warranted the belief of his being also the friend to whom his son had committed his child; for he was too deeply read in Sinclair's sentiments not to fear his taking undue advantage of any opportunity thrown in his way to counteract such steps as might be taken to obtain the corroborating testimony of such a witness. But he had himself done all that lay in his own power for her, or at least all that his dread of braving the world's censure, of being branded with ingratitude by that gentleman, and perhaps punished with ignominy by the son of lord Malcolm, should he yet live, admitted of his doing.

ing. He had written to Mr. Ainsley an account of his lordship's malady, and had entreated him, as he valued his young master, to visit Tantallan Castle as soon as possible, and when there, to demand who the young person was whom lady Madeline protected; adding his own belief, but without assigning a motive for doing so, of her affinity to his lordship's family.

This letter was detained only till his fixed and fatal purpose might so arrange the period of its delivery, that all explanation from the wretched writer would be hopeless: from the cold grave he could answer no interrogation—in its dark mansion, the voice of lady Madeline, accusing him of betraying her son, or the reproachful invectives of the unjust Sinclair, could never reach him; and to this promised refuge, the mistaken asylum to which so many victims of self-destruction have rushed unbidden, the lost Leopold hastened. Had he resolutely

lutely thrown off the shackles his own misconduct had forged, on the first discovery of Jessy's birth, by making Mr. Ainsley acquainted with every circumstance, while Donald was yet present to confirm what he averred, or had he dispatched that worthy creature with a proper address to tell his own story, instead of so basely aiding the deception that had lured him from his humble but happy abode, and cast him a wretched wanderer in a distant country, he would have been the happy instrument of restoring peace to his beloved lord, and seeing his divided family collected around him, while his winter of age, cheered by blessings which he owed to him, would have glided smoothly on, till his declining sun, having run its appointed course, would have set in that glory which marks the good man's exit, not less resplendent from the shades of error which had crossed its meridian. Such a conduct would have secured what is most
essential

essential to every man's peace, and without which he cannot be said to know happiness—the approbation of his own heart; now it was become his keenest accuser, and to escape from which, only one delusive path presented itself.

In the first moments of lord Malcolm's insensibility, it had appeared to him the only road to happiness and his son, but a succession of rapid ideas had left in his distempered mind no fixed purpose; it now beckoned the misguided Leopold to its fatal shores, on the which he dashed his frail bark, unsupported by the heavenly pilot whose anchor is our only refuge, or the passport by which, our voyage over, we may hope to gain admission.

The pistols he had so carefully concealed from his lordship, true to the fatal purpose of his soul, left in his long since miserable apartment the shattered remains of what had once been Leopold, and consigned to the unembodied

bodied world of spirits another guilty member.

The consternation of lady Madeline, and the distress of Jessy, when made acquainted with the catastrophe, could only be surpassed by the momentary horror of Frederick, who, in the first tumult, had, with several of the affrighted domestics, entered the room. He had been told Leopold was dead, and perhaps at that moment half-rejoiced at the information; but he who had never witnessed the sick couch, or contemplated the awful insignia of death under any form, could form no idea of its gloomy, and to him, its terrific chamber.

Those only who have witnessed the last efforts of expiring nature—who have felt the heart-appalling solemnity that reigns through the dreary mansion which holds a shrouded relic of mortality, even where pious resignation,
and

and the known virtues of the deceased, bid the survivor trust that it is but the soul's transit to endless felicity—only such can judge with what sensation a guilty spectator must enter on such a scene, when his eyes, resting on the mutilated corpse before him, vainly, through clotted gore, sought a feature once so familiar—when the commiserating voice of his fellow-servants, eagerly inquiring of each other what could have urged him to the fatal deed, struck on his distracted ear, and his accusing heart more loudly answered—“Thou art the man! But for thee, Leopold had been innocent—thou wast his seducer, not less his murderer, for it was thy work which nerved his arm.”

Incapable of sustaining a sight which awakened only pity in other breasts, but torture in his own, he would have gladly escaped, but a cold shivering had seized every limb—heavy perspiration
stood

stood on his aching brow—and he was conveyed to his own room in a state which gave lady Madeline fresh cause of alarm. But his bodily indisposition was transient—its effects on his mind unhappily more so; and her maternal solicitude was relieved in a few days by seeing him perfectly restored to his former health; and, the fatal cause removed, he was not long in regaining the false security that for a season permits the deluded votaries of vice to imagine they are happy men.

Leopold, in the cold dark mansion of his untimely grave, could no longer frustrate his future plans—no longer intimidate him, by threats of disclosure, from eagerly pursuing the phantom *title*, which still evaded his impatient grasp, for lord Malcolm yet lived. In vain the arrows of affliction assailed him in the form of death, and bereaved him of all he loved—insensibility had rendered him
alike

alike callous to the loss of an idolized son, and the affectionate servant once so necessary to his existence.

Jessy, the ever-attentive Jessy, regardless of every other concern, and, in her increasing tenderness for the hapless object of her care, almost unmindful of the expectation she had been warranted to form, that her birth was noble, now, by devoting every hour to him, constituted his world of happiness: she had learnt to anticipate his wayward wishes, could sooth his little irritations of temper, and was become the leading spring of all his actions.

But as comparative happiness under any form might add lengthened days to a life whose close only could promote his wishes, Frederick's first aim was to remove the last consolation destiny had left the venerable maniac; and to do this some caution was requisite, since he was well aware Jessy's penetration, far exceeding that of his too partial mother, would

would oblige him to deliberate, when, but for her, he would have proceeded more openly. Her avowed prejudice of him he had long since resolved should one day be rewarded by the revengeful hatred he now felt against her; but the marked suspicion, which he imagined was so palpable, and had appeared to have increased since the death of Leopold, was so evident to himself, obliged him to be guarded, although the mortifying reflection that he was tamely submitting to the bondage of such a girl ill suited his proud spirit.

The first return he had made to the friendship of Leopold, when for that friendship he had no longer any occasion, was to silence the regret which the feelings of humanity, her own heart, and a remembrance of his long and faithful services to her father, often induced lady Madeline to express, not only for his loss, but the still more dreadful action which had marked his end. By a disclosure of
the

the shameful sentiments her perfidious servant, as he then termed him, entertained for her ladyship, and a confession of the vile oath which he averred had been extorted from him by threats of representing him in such colours to lord Malcolm as could not fail to ruin himself and mother, by depriving both of his lordship's protection; adding, that from what had passed, he no longer doubted but that it was at the sole instigation of Leopold that lord Malcolm had persisted in disinheriting his son; "and who," he continued, "can tell how far his fatal influence over my grandfather may have contributed to effect his present state? remorse for which, and not, as you imagine, sympathy for his sufferings, has induced him to terminate his own existence—an event I never shall deplore but as the means were dreadful, as it relieves you from a man, from whose insults even your son, situated as he was, could not have protected you, and eman-

cipates me from a promise I could, during his life, only evade, but not annul."

Unhappily for Leopold, the rash impulse of one unguarded moment, too well remembered by lady Madeline, gave a degree of authenticity to information which otherwise she would have rejected as impossible; through such a channel she could not even doubt it; and the pity which had led her to commiserate the wretched Leopold, and bewail his fate, was instantaneously converted into cold contempt for his memory, which was branded with ingratitude and infamy.

But Jessy, to whom this black catalogue of atrocities was revealed, doubted if human nature could produce a character so vitiated, but more, that the tried and faithful servant of lord Malcolm should be the man; and most of his fellow-servants, even more attached to him in death than they had been through life, unconscious of the crime laid to his charge, still mourned his unhappy

happy fate with sincerity; but awed by the deed he had committed, and which they attributed wholly to his close attendance upon lord Malcolm, none were found anxious to supply his place and watchful care by becoming stationary in his lordship's apartments, to which he altogether confined himself, and over which Sinclair became the presiding Argus, when satisfied even the inanimate corpse of Leopold could no longer intimidate him by its presence.

But it was not always equally easy to evade the recollection that would pass through his mind, that such a being had once existed, and that he had most unjustly wronged him; yet the hour of retribution was too remote to steal with warning voice on the splendid visions he contemplated, the full establishment of which every passing event tended to advance.

For the avowed purposes of humanity, and to convince lord Malcolm's

domestics with what disinterested generosity he forgave his lordship's past neglect of him, he became a constant sharer in Jessy's melancholy employment of amusing his grandfather, during which he expressed a thousand fond solicitudes lest a task so incompatible with her years and sex should eventually become injurious to her health. But self-consideration formed no part of Jessy's character; and although no dormant spark of reason promised to reward her unwearied assiduity with even a shade of hope, she persevered until Frederick's prediction became, fatally for lord Malcolm, too soon verified: the constant exertion of spirits she found it requisite to support, and the close confinement, aided by the powerful recollection of Mrs. Duncannon's total neglect of her, or the no-less dreaded surmise that her friend and benefactress was no more, operated on her natural delicacy of frame, till, incapable of longer concealing its effects, she

she reluctantly owned her indisposition, but as resolutely refused to remain in her own room, until increasing lassitude prevented the possibility of her visiting his lordship; then, for the first time, she entreated lady Madeline to take her place, if she wished to reconcile her to the painful necessity of resigning it for a short period—but her ladyship shrunk from the task with fearful timidity.

Still, deeply interested in preserving a life which became daily more dear to her, and feeling satisfied that Frederick was not only better calculated to perform those duties required by her father, but willing to devote much of his time to him, she believed herself more justified in breaking the promise she had made to satisfy Jessy, than she would have been in a due observance of it, and contented herself with deputing Mary, her own woman, to attend lord Malcolm whenever Mr. Sinclair might deem it requisite, while she watched with tender

anxiety the sick-bed of her young favourite, whose increasing indisposition left her unconscious of the many days and sleepless nights her ladyship had passed over, and was told she might still anticipate, before the crisis of her disorder would enable the doctors to decide what the result would be; for the fever which tinged her lovely cheeks, and gave to her fine eyes of softest blue a fire so unnatural to their usual expression, had produced a degree of delirium that allowed her only a confused idea of the characters around her, to each of whom she occasionally gave appellations most suited to the disordered subjects floating in her own wandering imagination, whenever she addressed them.

Lord Malcolm had too long been the fixed object of her kind solicitude for even the fevered mind to regret his claims; with him she held conversation, supplied his puerile wants, and recommended

mended the nourishment he best enjoyed, even when her own parched lips refused that which exhausted nature required, and her debilitated frame would have been incapable of supporting itself, had she been sensible of the earnest entreaties he had made that she would return to him, before his inhuman gaoler had thought of an expedient to relieve himself from importunities which he had resolved never to gratify.

A little attention to the situation of lord Malcolm's mind enabled him to discover it was easily impressed with terror. After much hesitation, therefore, he acknowledged that to secure his lordship's safety it had been found expedient to remove Jessy altogether from his person, as they had discovered she meditated his life, and only waited a suitable opportunity of being alone with him to effect her design—"To prevent which," he added, "and the better to protect your lordship, I shall never leave you myself,

without placing some one in the room on whom I can depend."

"Kind creature!" he replied; "and will you always be my friend?"

"Always," he returned.

"But you will not harm Jessy?" said his lordship, with tears in his eyes; "and when she has forgotten to be cruel, shall I not see her again?"

"You shall see her this instant," replied Frederick, "if it is your wish to do so, and I will leave the room; but as you value your safety, do not suffer her to come near you, for she always carries the pistol which destroyed Leopold."

"Poor Leopold!" he returned, with a sigh; "and yet how pretty she was, to be so inhuman; and so kind once! but now she cannot look so."

"Shall I send for her, my lord?" asked the vile asperser of her innocence and goodness.

"Not for worlds," said the agitated Malcolm, catching the arm of Sinclair, and

and looking wildly round him, as if already dreading her entrance, unsolicited. "No, no!—Say Malcolm is dead, when she does come; and when you go yourself, be mindful to lock the door, lest she comes to look for me when you are gone."

Had every fiend interested in the welfare of a condemned soul—every agent of a bad man's deeds, assembled together, they could not have devised a plan to aid his cause, where a successful issue promised such a full harvest as did this to the subtle Sinclair. It required some exertion to in part tranquillize the fears to which he had given birth; but a more solemn assurance of protection, and promises never to leave his apartment unlocked during his own absence, at last confirmed the unfortunate Malcolm's belief that he had, in this kind stranger (for such he appeared to him), a friend who would never forsake him, and at once sealed his own strict confinement; elate with

which, Frederick flew to lady Madeline, whom he acquainted with the singular terror his lordship had expressed of his being destined to die by the hands of Jessy, whom he had strictly forbidden him to allow to appear in his sight, and indeed every other female of the household, lest she should deceive them all, and gain admittance to his apartment.

Lady Madeline saw nothing improbable in this account, for she had been given to understand every species of extravagance might naturally be expected to result from insanity, and almost rejoiced to find that in the event of Jessy's recovery, she would not again be subject to the mournful confinement which had doubtless thrown her on a bed of sickness, and from which there was at present but little hopes of her arising, for a heavy stupor had succeeded the first delirium, and as yet the doctors continued to doubt if even her youth, on which alone they depended, would enable

able her to surmount the dangerous effects of an attack so severe.

But medical skill has not unfrequently owned its obligations to that of the nurses; and lady Madeline was a kind, though inexperienced assistant. But when her efforts were seconded by abilities of no common kind—when the hand which had so often raised the poor and needy from the bed of pain administered Jessy's medicine—when the voice, whose distant sounds conveyed joy to the sorrowful, consolation to the afflicted, bade her also live—then it was that all-powerful Nature, surmounting disease, enabled her aching eyes to rest with rapture on the well-known features—her delighted ears to recognize the transporting sounds of Mrs. Duncannon's voice, to press whose hands in grateful acknowledgment that she knew her, to express her surprise and pleasure by a faint smile, which played over her languid features, was all that for some hours

she was permitted to do, then her benevolent nurses were gratified by the conviction that there was room for hope; and, in the fulness of her heart, lady Madeline had imparted not only the leading events with which Margretta had already acquainted her, but those which had succeeded, before their lovely invalid was enabled to participate in the mutual enjoyment of their conversation, or to express her painful solicitude to know how his lordship had borne her long absence, and her desire to resume her office of attending him as soon as possible.

It was only requisite to acquaint her, that by one of those capricious turns so incident to his malady, he had not only ceased to ask after her, but had absolutely forbidden all female attendants, suffering no person but Frederick to visit his room, whose time was now so occupied by his close attendance on him, that her ladyship rarely saw him but at meals.

meals. Conscious that whatever was the prominent idea in lord Malcolm's mind, from that he would derive most pleasure, she was happy in feeling the present system would leave her more leisure than she could otherwise have claimed for the enjoyment of Mrs. Duncannon's society, from whom she soon learnt the particulars of her visit to the bourn side, and the altered destiny of her friend Seymour—events which could not fail to be interesting to her. Her grateful affection still bound her to the worthy Margretta, and never had she ceased to remember, with fond enthusiasm, those hours passed with the loved and only companion of her infant days, even when no fond hope whispered they might meet again; now there was a probability of her doing so, and that at least as the daughter of a gentleman, if not the descendant of a house even more noble than his own.

There was a pleasure in the reflection,
but

but a still higher gratification in the assurance Mrs. Duncannon gave her, that she still retained her wonted interest in his affectionate remembrance, and that he would anticipate the return of both with eagerness, as she had promised, on leaving him, that Jessy should be the companion of her journey, if no unforeseen occurrence had rendered it impracticable; and she still adhered to the intention of gaining that point, although the peculiar situation in which Jessy was now placed rendered her naming the subject somewhat delicate.

Lady Madeline had not only avowed her own belief of their affinity, but acknowledged the seal as having decidedly once been the property of lord Malcolm, and protested herself ready to support the claims of Jessy, whenever any plan could be suggested to put the necessary inquiries on foot; and, in direct opposition to the commands of Sinclair, entreated Mrs. Duncannon would name
any,

any, which to her superior judgment might promise to be most beneficial to their cause.

Thus called upon, she did not hesitate to name what could hardly have failed to strike even a less discerning mind than lady Madeline's, but which had certainly hitherto escaped her ladyship's—the *probability* that on a reference to lord Malcolm's papers, some one might furnish them with Mr. Ainsley's address, who, if living, and actually the person to whose care Jessy was consigned on her arrival in England, would decidedly have had other letters on the subject than that of which Donald was the bearer. As the friend of lord Malcolm's son, there could be little doubt of his being fully acquainted with his destiny, and this was important information, supposing it unconnected with Jessy's birth, which the present state of lord Malcolm's health rendered it essential to obtain.

Lady

Lady Madeline's reliance on Mrs. Duncannon's judgment left her only to regret that she had been so long deprived of her excellent counsel, and not less her own want of penetration in not having recollected what, now pointed out, appeared too simple and direct a clue to the desired intelligence to have escaped her own recollection; and still more was she surprised that it should never have occurred to Frederick, to whom she lost no time in communicating what had passed, with her own wishes that he would carefully examine every paper that might lead to a discovery so important to their family.

There were few events connected with his present interest for which Sinclair was not prepared, and still fewer against which he had not provided; hence the arrival of, to him, so unpleasant a visitor as Mrs. Duncannon, had put him on his guard for any steps that might be taken for Jessy's advantage. To approve those
claims,

claims, which his utmost art might not in the end set aside, would not be politic; but under the mask of lending assistance to what might be suggested by the wisdom of this paragon, whose perfection he had so often heard vaunted, he could easily procrastinate, if not altogether frustrate her designs. Hitherto he had sedulously avoided more intercourse with her than was absolutely necessary, as due to the forms of politeness; and this he could do without singularity, as his own attendance on lord Malcolm, and Mrs. Duncannon's attention to Jessy, gave each a pretext for retiring to different apartments.

But the little he had seen of her sufficed to make him trust her visit would not be a lengthened one, since there was in her manner a degree of superiority that awed him, and in her intelligent dark eyes he fancied an expression not always favourable to himself. Her questions respecting lord Malcolm somewhat embarrassed

embarrassed him, for he was always apprehensive her inquiries would terminate in a desire to see him, a circumstance which of all others he most dreaded; for he was aware his unhappy prisoner, already sensible of the change, would, with too much justice, bewail the rigour which had succeeded the playful care of the kind Jessy, to the first person allowed to approach him. Now the lonely walls of his apartment alone echoed back his plaintive groans, and his aged eyes, dim with tears, were scarcely ever raised from the floor, save when a footstep passing in the vaulted passage caught his ear; then he would start, and call on Jessy—for still he loved to repeat her name—but she came not; and the heart-drawn sigh, as he returned to his mournful seat, bespoke the anguish of his bitter disappointment. Yet this picture of lord Malcolm's situation was not wanting to give Mrs. Duncannon a contemptible opinion of his relative.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.
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MARGRETTA's unvarnished tale, a keen remembrance of Mary's wrongs, and his persecution of Jessy, had prepared her to allow him but a very small share of her esteem when they met, and the first interview confirmed her belief that no trait of his character had been exaggerated, "or aught set down in malice;" for the outlines of hypocrisy were much too strongly delineated in every feature to elude her penetration. The forced complacency with which she was received could not for a moment deceive her; nor was she long in discovering that her presence at Tantallan Castle would soon become irksome to Mr. Sinclair.

The alarming situation in which she  
had

had found Jessy for some days rendered her unmindful of any other concern (the sincere regret she felt for lord Malcolm's situation excepted); but the recovery of her young friend, and lady Madeline's wish of farther investigating the circumstances of her birth, determined her to remain at least till the affair was in train for the necessary inquiries; or that in the event of those inquiries failing, and her long-cherished hopes proving fallacious, she would be at liberty to claim the future protection of her *protégée*, by publicly acknowledging her as an adopted child. From the proposed application to Mr. Ainsley she anticipated the most gratifying success; nor did there, to her sanguine wishes, appear any difficulty in tracing his address through the medium she had pointed out; and until repeated assurances from lady Madeline that her son, no less anxious than themselves to obtain the desired intelligence, had as yet vainly searched  
among .

among lord Malcolm's papers for any that might assist their further search, could she be induced reluctantly to believe that Mr. Sinclair was not quite so disinterested in the business as her ladyship was led to suppose. He had, however, promised to continue the search, and still Mrs. Duncannon waited the result, though somewhat less sanguine in her expectations, from what she began to consider a doubtful quarter, when a letter to lord Malcolm, bearing the signature of Ainsley, was produced, as the only one which had yet come to hand. By the date it must have been written before the unhappy difference took place, for Alphonso was not once named in it, neither was there any clue to the written address; and Frederick gave it as his decided opinion, that if his lordship had received any since, of which his son was the subject, he had destroyed them at the time his resentment was carried to such lengths.

This

This might have been the case, but still Mrs. Duncannon had her doubts if a more zealous friend to Jessy's cause would not have traced the desired information. But as it was now clearly proved that her researches must extend beyond the precincts of Tantallan Castle, if she expected to realize her yet fond hopes of ascertaining the origin of her favourite, she determined on once more visiting London, and taking the advice of her own solicitor on the subject, a man on whose known integrity and superior judgment she could rely. But desirous of putting Mr. Sinclair's sincerity to the test, she said, that although a reference to Mr. Ainsley, had it been possible to obtain his address, would at once have removed every doubt respecting her young friend, and probably placed her relationship to lord Malcolm in the most satisfactory point of view, there was a no less certain method yet untried, of ascertaining the death or existence



istence of her father, by a direct application to the war-office.

Frederick secretly wondered that her mighty sagacity had never before suggested this; but with most glaring effrontery, masked under grateful acknowledgments for the kind interest she took in his family's welfare, assured her it was a step he had already taken, but that, unwilling to agitate either lady Madeline or Jessy, by the almost certain prospect of information so important, it was his intention to have waited the result of those answers he anticipated, before he had made them acquainted with his having written.

Mrs. Duncannon expressed the pleasure she really felt, adding—"That as it was her intention to visit London very shortly, she should be happy to follow up those inquiries by a personal application at the war-office, and would venture to predict that no further difficulty could arise."

This

This was a stretch of friendship with which Sinclair could have well dispensed; but flattering himself with a belief that any inquiry she could make would only confirm his uncle's death, which he had long since persuaded himself was certain, and satisfied that even such information could add nothing towards establishing proofs of Jessy's birth, he felt no concern at the trouble she proposed taking upon herself, and only rejoiced that it presented a prospect of her removal from the castle. But it required all the duplicity of which he was master, to conceal the chagrin with which he heard her propose Jessy's accompanying her, on the plea that change of air and scene would be beneficial to her health, which still remained delicate.

No less averse to the separation than himself, lady Madeline listened with real sorrow to a request that she would resign her for a short time. She possessed no power over Jessy to authorize a refusal,



fusal, but pleaded her own melancholy situation, which only the society of that sweet girl had hitherto rendered supportable.—“ You,” she added, “ my dear Mrs. Duncannon, you will return to the bosom of friendship—to your beloved Seymour; but who shall cheer the dull monotony of my secluded life, when I have lost you both?”

The name of Seymour had awakened a thousand soft sensations in the gentle bosom of Jessy; in that of Mrs. Duncannon an ardent wish to hasten her return, and delightful anticipation of the meeting between her young friends; to the dark selfish mind of Sinclair it conveyed only the corrosive pangs of jealousy, hatred, and revenge; and while Mrs. Duncannon fancied she could distinctly trace every discordant passion in the ill-concealed anger of his lowering brow, his anxious mother read only the keen disappointment of unrequited love,

and vainly wished to inspire Jessy with her own partiality for him.

“ We are, then, left to regret, my dear madam,” he said, when stifled anger allowed him to speak, “ that what we considered a real happiness, in the present melancholy state of our family, should terminate in a painful task, for which we were wholly unprepared. I am well aware Tantallan Castle, in the present state of lord Malcolm’s health, can have few charms for Mrs. Duncannon; but in removing Jessy from it, you certainly deprive it of all that can contribute a comfort to my mother’s solitary retirement, or render life desirable to her son, who, though unhappily forbidden to hope even a change of sentiment in his own favour, derived a consolation from witnessing the mutual attachment subsisting between those so dear to him, lady Madeline and the amiable Jessy. But if the separation is absolutely requisite

site to her happiness as well as yours, we are left no authority but submission to your pleasure. I had trusted you would at least have extended your visit until the expected letters had relieved our suspense. Perhaps," he added, with a sarcastic smile, which could not pass unobserved by Mrs. Duncannon, whose eyes had been steadfastly fixed on him while speaking, "perhaps their arrival may determine *who* will in future have most right to exact obedience from Jessy—lady Madeline Sinclair or Mrs. Duncannon."

Fully possessed with a belief that Jessy was, beyond a doubt, the niece of lady Madeline, she did not hesitate to believe also that a short time would, by fully substantiating her claims, oblige her wholly to resign her own, and for this reason became more anxious to gratify Henry by an interview with his lovely friend, while she yet retained the power to do so; but fully aware of the

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character

character with which she had to contend, and desirous of proving her own disinterested zeal in Jessy's welfare, she assured both lady Madeline and her son, that satisfied a change of air was become absolutely essential to the more perfect restoration of Jessy's health, she had flattered herself they would both, seeing the necessity of the trial, have acquitted her of every selfish motive, and as readily acceded to the proposal.—“ In resigning her,” she continued, “ to your ladyship's care, on my leaving Scotland, it was, you will recollect, in trust only, until my return, which, although prolonged from unforeseen circumstances, has not as yet produced any which have altogether annulled my claims as a friend, anxious and ready to adopt her as my daughter, until, every doubt removed respecting her real family, I may be called upon to resign her to those whom nature and law shall give superior power over her. To say that in such a case I should

should joyfully relinquish my own pretensions, or that I am fully persuaded it will be decided in favour of your ladyship, is needless; for the event, be assured, will prove both. But a conviction that Jessy's health does not admit of a delay, and having business in London which will demand my presence, I must be allowed to hope lady Madeline will reconcile herself to a temporary separation, when it is so much for the advantage of her young friend, and that Mr. Sinclair will be assured only such motives, and not those he has assigned, have actuated me. I have, my dear sir," she added, "been too familiar with sorrow to fly the house of mourning, and could I have contributed to the happiness of an individual in Tantallan Castle, it is not the present cloud which obscures the comforts of its family could have forced me from it."

"And yet," returned Sinclair, interrupting her, "you persist in taking along

with you the only sun that threw an enlivening ray on the sombre shade. Was it requisite to transmit its endearing beams to those who already revel in the full enjoyment of every earthly blessing—rich in friends, family, and fortune? Pardon me, madam, if I add, the unexpected accumulation of such gifts from bounteous Heaven might have sufficed your *protégée*, or at least have induced him to remember, that a man of equal rank would not tamely submit to the triumphs he has in contemplation, when Jessy, torn from the protection of his family, shall be enrolled among the number, and taught to despise him who would instantly give her those honours which lord Stewart will wait to see the law bestow before she is received as his daughter.”

Too guarded to betray the contempt in which she held him, Mrs. Duncan-non coolly replied, that politeness had obliged her to hear what Mr. Sinclair had

had



had to say, but that as the subject was altogether foreign to the point in question, and to her wholly inexplicable, it was not at all requisite for her to make any comments on it.

Lady Madeline, vexed by the severity of Frederick's speech, endeavoured to palliate it by adverting to her own regret at the necessity of the approaching separation from her favourite, a sense of which, she said, added to his own disappointment, had made her son too warm. "But since you promise to return her to us," she continued, with a forced smile, "when her renovated health shall render it safe to do so, we will endeavour to forget the severity of her absence in the anticipation of a meeting that will give pleasure to all; for you will of course return with Jessy to the castle, when we are enabled to claim the dear lost offspring of my Alphonso."

Mrs. Duncannon assured her no summons could be so gratifying, nor could

she receive any that she should obey with so much alacrity.

Jessy, delighted to find her still unmoved either by the entreaties of lady Madeline, or Sinclair's insolence, freely forgave the latter, when no longer apprehensive of his unjustly detaining her, and as sincerely pitied the former for the cheerless life she knew she must lead during her absence. Still more was every tender regret called forth for the unfortunate lord Malcolm, whom she was desirous of seeing, if possible, before she left the castle, as Mrs. Duncannon had fixed the period of their departure in a few days.

Terror had so long kept lady Madeline from her father's apartments, that no entreaties could have prevailed on her ladyship to accompany her thither, and Mrs. Duncannon had never been permitted to see him, on the plea that the sight of a stranger, and that of a female, would add much to his distress.

Mary.



Mary, the thoughtless giddy attendant of lady Madeline, well tutored by Sinclair, who had found it requisite to secure her interest in his favour, and whom she believed violently attached, had assured her the attempt would be hazardous, as his lordship still cherished the antipathy which his fears had created, and was so alarmed lest she should visit his room, that she never dared enter it herself, but when Mr. Sinclair was present to protect her.

Unintimidated by this account, she expressed her wish to Frederick that she might be allowed to see lord Malcolm, accompanied by himself, as she was particularly anxious to do so before she left the castle. But, already apprised of her intention from Mary, he was prepared for the request; and now, for the first time, she was told, in confidence, that his lordship's malady had increased to such a height as to render the closest confinement necessary; that he would

allow no person but himself to approach him, and often compelled him to leave his presence.—“ Judge then, my dear Jessy,” he said, “ how little your spirits are qualified to witness such a scene, and how little Mrs. Duncannon would thank me for conducting you to it. Rather let me entreat you to abandon the intention, as highly improper ; and as you value my mother’s peace, already sufficiently disturbed, do not reveal to her what it has hitherto required my utmost caution to conceal from her.”

Jessy heard, with trembling concern, the situation of his lordship, and she retired to her own room, painfully ruminating on the intelligence, but still more than ever anxious to see the venerable sufferer before she left him, perhaps for ever, since she had already determined, unless obliged as a relative of the family to return to it, nothing should ever induce her again to become an inmate of the same mansion with Sinclair.

Mrs.

Mrs. Duncannon, alike apprehensive that, in her present state of health, such an interview might, by agitating her too much, render her unequal to the journey, or that, should his lordship evince his former partiality for her, she might be induced, from motives of humanity, to resume her melancholy office of nursing him, and refuse to accompany her, had professed herself no less averse to the interview than lady Madeline; she had therefore no alternative but to make her visit alone, whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself.

But one night remained, previous to the commencement of their journey, and with a resolution no difficulties could stagger, she determined to proceed to the well-known apartment, when the family had retired for the evening. But lady Madeline and Mrs. Duncannon, as if equally unwilling to part, remained in earnest conversation long after Mr. Sinclair had taken his departure; and

Jessy, measuring the time by her impatience, calculated the night was fast advancing, when each retired to their respective apartments. In her own, she listened with anxiety to the different footsteps which echoed through the ancient galleries, nor was it until all had ceased, she ventured to glide over the cold pavement.

In passing through the dreary passages which led to lord Malcolm's apartments, a waning moon scarcely emitted sufficient light through the high and heavily-painted casements to point out the way; but recollection supplied the deficiency, and she had just turned that which she knew would bring her to the door of the antichamber, when a figure of more than common height, enveloped in his plaid, stepped suddenly forward, and arrested her progress. Too much alarmed to speak, she remained almost petrified with terror; when advancing still nearer, and taking her by the arm,  
he

he said—"Rash girl! are you so determined on your own destruction, that no warning voice can turn your footsteps from yon fatal spot? I know the purpose which brings you here, and too well I know what the result will be: if, therefore, you would save yourself, return, while the power to do so is yours, and as you value your future peace, fly not only this place, but the castle also. Already that room contains sufficient misery—do not let your destruction add bitterness to the souls of those who love you—and pity lord Malcolm!"

At that instant the creaking of a door, slowly and cautiously opened, attracted her attention; but it evidently alarmed her companion, who forcibly retaining her hand, and attempting to hurry through the gallery, exclaimed in hurried accents—"A moment longer, and I had been too late—Now, at least, I have saved you. Should you return, no  
friendly

friendly voice will be at hand to warn you."

"And who are you," said a voice she knew to be Sinclair's, "that under the mask of friendship, dare trespass here at such an hour?" at the same time attempting to grasp the plaid which wrapped the stranger.

"One who can own no fealty to a tyrant," was the answer, seizing, in return, the uplifted arm of Sinclair, whom in an instant he hurled to the ground, and, darting by him, was in a moment gone.

Jessy, motionless with fright, was alike incapable of avoiding Sinclair, by escaping to her own room, or explaining the motives which had brought her into such a situation; when, having recovered his feet, with bitter execrations of revenge, he said—"Tell me, Mary, the villain's name?"

But before they yet more astonished Jessy could reply, a light quick step, as if of one  
in



in haste, evidently approached ; and Sinclair, almost carrying in his arms his terrified companion towards the anti-room, stopped not, until, having reached the door she had before seen open, he rushed hastily in, and closed it with the utmost caution.

She had scarcely time to perceive that she was, at that hour of the evening, in a remote part of the castle, alone with the man of whom she had the greatest dread, in a solitary room ; but the idea was sufficient to awaken all the energies of her before sinking spirits. She was convinced it was not her he had expected, and this armed her with resolution ; when, therefore, having closed the door, he turned to the chair on which she had thrown her trembling frame on entering the room, she firmly demanded to know why she was detained in that apartment ?

It was now Sinclair's turn to exhibit every symptom of consternation and surprise,



surprise, for seldom had his evil genius placed him in such a situation. Passion had already increased the inebriety, which was sufficiently visible in the vacant eyes which he fixed upon Jessy as she spoke, and while, in a voice choked by anger and disappointment, he exclaimed—"What the devil does all this mean?" she coolly answered, endeavouring to conceal her terror—"It is from you I would ask the explanation—that which relates to myself is very soon told. An ardent wish to see lord Malcolm before I left the castle, and which nobody would gratify, determined me to make the attempt alone, for I was unrestrained by any personal fear, and feel satisfied, thus even unprotected, he would not harm me—The rest you know; and I now only ask permission to return to my own apartment;" for even the wish of seeing lord Malcolm yielded to the terror which inspired her when she looked on the inflamed countenance  
of

of the intoxicated Sinclair, who taking the hand she saw it was in vain to withhold from his detested touch, said, in a lower voice—"And how does my lovely cousin know that I was not expecting her to cheer this gloomy hour?"

"Because," she said, with increasing firmness, without appearing to notice the incoherency of his manner, "you mentioned Mary, and could not possibly anticipate my intention of visiting his lordship."

"But you had a companion, madam," said the insolent Sinclair, "whom I will yet discover; for you was not alone."

"But our meeting was as unexpected, and perhaps as ill-timed, as this; for I neither know the man, nor the purport of his advice, and am still convinced he, like yourself, must have mistaken the person he addressed."

"Appearances are, however, as little in your favour as other peoples," returned Frederick; "and as explanations may be equally inconvenient to each party,

party, we will wave them altogether. There are subjects more suited to the present moment, and at your feet, inexorable Jessy, behold the devoted Sinclair—hear him swear never to rise until you have promised to requite his love.”

Scarcely had he assumed the prostrate posture, and finished the sentence, than the door was forced open with violence, and Mary, her whole frame palsied by fright, rushed into the room, exclaiming, in an agony—“He is coming! he is coming!”

“Who is coming, fool?” demanded Sinclair, starting on his feet.

“Leopold!” she replied, with increasing horror in every feature—“It must be Leopold, for no hand could have been so cold but his, and I still feel the touch, as he tried to pull me from the door.”

A cold chill stole through the veins of Sinclair at the repetition of a name to which neither the rage of disappointment,

ment, nor the intoxicated state of his faculties, could render him indifferent; but in a moment convinced it must have been the same man under whose blow he was still smarting, he exclaimed, when passion allowed him the power of utterance—"There is some villain meanly inspecting my actions, by thus stealing on my privacy, and I will this moment discover who it is, if I alarm the whole castle."

Gaining resolution from the relief this step promised her, and anxious only to escape from the hateful Sinclair, whom she now feared more than ever, she mildly said, as circumstances had rendered it impossible for her to see lord Malcolm, she would return to her own room, as she had no apprehension of meeting any molestation in her way.

"But as your friend may be my enemy, madam," Frederick replied, haughtily, "I shall choose first to satisfy myself  
upon

upon that point, by knowing what his intentions are, and therefore insist upon your remaining where you are, until I have done so."

Unwilling to irritate him farther, by opposition to his will, and feeling a degree of safety from even the presence of the imprudent creature whose temerity in coming to that apartment had, she thought, been justly punished by the terror she had felt, she only answered, that as it was getting late, she trusted he would not detain her longer than was absolutely necessary, and she had little doubt but that he would find the whole business, upon investigation, had originated in some frolic among the servants.

Without deigning to answer her, he was leaving the room, at the door of which he was met by one of the domestics, who, in a half-whisper, entreated him to visit lord Malcolm's apartment, adding—"I am very much mistaken if  
there

there is not a very sudden and material change in his lordship since you last saw him."

The eager anticipation ever buoyant in his imagination, and which rendered him a wakeful watchman over that life whose every sand he appeared to number, in an instant predominated over every other consideration, and alike regardless of the object he was at that instant in pursuit of, and the females in his own room, he hurried to that of lord Malcolm.

### CHAPTER III.

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JESSY, no longer a captive, or restrained by his hateful presence, would have gladly sought hers, but did not feel justified

tified in doing so, without one effort to save the thoughtless girl whom concomitant circumstances had made her companion, and whom conscious guilt, now that she had in part recovered her fright, kept silent; when Jessy turning towards her, said—"Perhaps, Mary, under this roof only lady Madeline is privileged to question your actions; therefore I forbear to ask what possible motive could have brought you at this very unseasonable hour to Mr. Sinclair's room; but as your friend, I would advise you, having seen his situation, to leave it with me. In my way to the apartments of lord Malcolm, I have myself been forcibly detained by him—you were evidently expected; however, as the transactions of this night must be explained to her ladyship in the morning, you can, I hope, justify your present visit."

Bursting into tears, she entreated permission to return with Jessy to her apartment, promising when there to acquaint her

her

her with the whole—" But indeed," she added, " I dare not go alone through the long passage."

Jessy knew no fear but that of being again detained where she was, and assuring her the innocent had nothing to apprehend, led the way, accompanied by her trembling attendant; but the gallery through which they had to pass, no longer obscured by the darkness which had inspired Mary with dread, now presented a light still more awful and appalling: rapid flashes of lightning, darting in quick succession through the gothic windows, left them at no loss to retrace their way; and scarcely had they entered Jessy's room, in which a cheerful fire diffused that warmth become so essential to her chilled frame, than a peal of distant thunder caught her ear—" We are going to have a storm, Mary," she said, with as much composure as she could assume, in pity to the affrighted girl, whose agitation from various causes
became

became distressing, “and you had better remain with me until it is over; but do not allow yourself to be unnecessarily alarmed, for however violent it may be, we are secure from its effects; therefore take a chair, and sit down for a few minutes, during which it may pass over.”

“Not,” she replied, in faltering accents, “until I have told you what a thoughtless wretch your goodness has saved from destruction.”

At that moment another flash, followed by still louder thunder, added to her past terror, and hiding her face, she exclaimed, in agony—“Ah! it is a judgment on me—I deserve all I have suffered this night, but it will be my death;” and Jessy, aware of the imbecility of her mind, perhaps unsupported by the principles which would have combatted such fear, began to apprehend if such a succession of terror would not prove more than she could sustain; for it was
some

some minutes before her gentle arguments had any effect in tranquillizing the agitation under which she laboured; nor, until assured that only the guilty and impenitently wicked had really cause to tremble lest Divine judgment should overtake them, could she be persuaded to believe the present storm was such as might naturally be expected, as incident to that period of the year, and by no means, as she had rashly considered it, a visitation upon her sins—"For although I have often, Mary," she continued, "seen you very thoughtless, and, I regret to say, at times imprudent, I would not willingly believe that you have added vice to your faults."

"And that I have not," she returned, "I owe to the blessed chance which brought you to Mr. Sinclair's room; but for you I had too assuredly been lost for ever."

She then related to the astonished

Jessy the vile artifice which had been used on the part of Sinclair, to overcome those scruples that had hitherto guarded the virtue which, though contaminated by his pernicious counsel, had not yielded to his base entreaties. Elated by the gross flattery which might have subdued stronger minds than hers, she attempted not to disguise the pleasure with which she heard his vows of unalterable love, whenever he had an opportunity of repeating them in private to her; but though her pride had been thus gratified by the condescending preference of lady Madeline's son, her rebel heart had often pleaded forcibly for a far more humble suitor—for a man who, being upon an equality with herself, proudly owned his affection, and whose superior advantages over the personal graces of Sinclair would have left him nothing to fear from such a rival, had that rival moved in his own sphere, and by so doing left nothing to

to feed the vanity of a thoughtless girl : but the vigilance incident to real affection is not easily eluded.

Glendairn fancied an indifference on the part of Mary. Suspicions thus inimical to his peace, by gaining ground, could not leave him an indifferent spectator of her actions ; nor was he long in tracing, to a being already hateful in his sight, the source of his own inquietude. With the ardour of generous love he pleaded his own cause, urged his prior rights to those of Sinclair, and reminded her of their plighted faith ; with the warmth of a disinterested friend, he warned her against the treachery of her new lover, pointed out the fallacy of supposing he had any views but her destruction ; and often, in the agony of despair, vowed to acquaint her friends with that danger he found it impossible to save her from, but which he nevertheless saw awaited her.

Of the very few *fixed* principles in

Mary's mind, a veneration for her parents had been most predominant; the second was affection for Glendairn, who was little less dear to them than their own child, and to whose union with her they had ever looked forward with pleasure; she therefore listened with complacency to advice which she always promised to follow, though wanting the resolution to do so—assured him he had nothing to apprehend from Mr. Sinclair—and finally, that his suspicions were unjust, because unfounded. But the artful sophistry of Sinclair gradually weakened, though it had not yet subdued, every claim of the generous Glendairn; and Mary, intoxicated by the visionary prospects which had so imperceptibly drawn her to the very verge of ruin, regardless of every kind admonition, alike forgetful of parents and lover, and hurried on by the impulse of the moment, had that very evening made an appointment which would for ever have sealed

sealed all her claims on the protection of the one, or the affection of the other. But the castle contained a friend, more faithful to the injured Glendairn than his mistress had proved, and though not himself an inhabitant of it, he was no stranger to the assignation on which, in part, his own happiness depended; for notwithstanding he believed it was become possible to tear an object so unworthy from his heart, an ardent wish to snatch her from the destruction she appeared bent upon yet remained, and he flew with avidity to rescue her, if happily he could do so, at least for that time; and gratified by the degrading blow with which he had levelled the dastard Sinclair to the ground, he was hastening from the spot where he could no longer remain with safety, to decide upon the best means of acquainting Mary's family with her danger, and the necessity of her removal from the castle, since deaf to all his entreaties, when

a second figure glanced by him with a fearful step.

An impulse he could not resist urged him to follow, and again wrapping his plaid more closely round him, he proceeded to the door of Sinclair's room, at which Mary was already listening with astonishment to the voice of Frederick, evidently in conversation with some person, notwithstanding he had expected her, and that secrecy was requisite in their interview. To have spoken to her in this situation was to hazard a discovery of his person that might have been attended with danger, which as far as it related to himself he would have despised—but the bread of those dearer to him than self, depended on the protection of lord Malcolm's family: his father, grown grey in the service of his lord, would, he was convinced, never survive his dismissal from it; and his mother, no longer capable of work, must resign those comforts which the situation of her husband,

as

as warden of the castle, amply supplied to their winter of age.

Mary was no longer worthy such a sacrifice; but one effort was to be made—not, he thought, for herself, but the aged parents, who could not survive her disgrace. At first he intended speaking to her in a low voice, but she had laid her hand on the lock of the door, as if to open it; he could bear no more, and darting forward, rudely grasped the extended hand, at the same time endeavouring to draw her towards him; but a remembrance of Leopold, as she glided through the gloomy passages, had already terrified her imagination, and rendered it susceptible of the smallest alarm: the hand, whose coldness her fears had magnified to an icy chill, rendered her incapable of sustaining more, and with a conviction that the shade of Leopold, sensible of her intention, meant to warn her of her error, she forced her way into the room, for that protection she might

have found in the arms of her faithful Glendairn, whose only security was now in flight, which he had effected before the thoughtless cause of his solicitude; and her second guardian angel, had re-passed the gallery to Jessy's apartment, where Mary, having finished her simple narrative of errors, which had originated more in judgment than heart, gratefully promised to treasure the excellent advice, which she believed would effectually save her from all Mr. Sinclair's future insinuations; they sat silently listening to the storm, which appeared rapidly approaching towards them; for the lightning strengthened in every flash, and each succeeding peal of thunder, as it rolled over their heads, sounded still more tremendous than the last, its violence augmented by the howling winds, as they collected all their force, while torrents of rain poured from the bursting clouds.

Lady Madeline, of all beings the most
timid,

timid, had more than once rung her bell, before Jessy could prevail on Mary to obey the summons; when feeling that she should herself prefer passing the rest of the night in Mrs. Duncannon's room to remaining alone in her own, she accompanied her affrighted companion, and then tapped gently at her friend's, which adjoined it, and who, incapable of resting, had already dressed herself with an intention of visiting her, therefore expressed no surprise at her entrance, or the pale countenance, which she attributed wholly to the effects of the storm, but which, in reality, the various occurrences of the evening had contributed much more to divest of its natural serenity.

The alarm which pervaded their apartment was not long in extending itself throughout the castle, for nothing could exceed the horrors of the now-warring elements: the stormy Forth rolled

its turbulent waves with resistless fury at the castle's base, as if bent on proving the proud security of its firm foundation; while the awful and appalling thunder echoed over its time-worn, but not weakened battlements, as vainly the lightning hurled its destructive fire over the darkened turrets, and the ceaseless torrents spouted against the casements, on which were blazoned feats of chivalry, the deeds of other times—devices formed by those who no longer survive to explain their meaning, and arms of which the present descendant of the ancient family they represented was no longer proud.

The servants, collected in the spacious hall, endeavoured to lose a sense of the horrors which raged abroad, by assembling round the cheerful fire, and rallying each other upon the apprehension which insensibly depicted itself upon most of their features, that of the females in particular; but it was a vain effort

effort—and still they listened in dismay, when guns of distress were heard to succeed each other.

“Heaven preserve the poor creatures who are exposed to such danger!” clasping his hands together, said one.

“But ’tis not our prayers will save them,” replied the second, “and we had better look out, if any assistance can perchance be afforded them.”

One and all arose, but some, unequal to sustain the furious blast, that almost dared the stoutest heart to brave its violence, returned discomfited to their seats, as they said, to take care of the women, while a few more resolute attempted to reach the shore, for the purpose of ascertaining how near the vessel might be, whose destruction was, they believed, inevitable, as well as that of her more wretched crew, unless her being dashed upon an adjacent rock might afford them any chance of preserving the latter by their unanimous exertions,

to aid which, the dauntless Glendairn was already in waiting; for the storm which love and jealousy had raised in his own breast, as he mournfully retreated from the castle, had not rendered him altogether unmindful of that which was fast collecting around him, and by the flashes which had so rapidly succeeded each other, he had seen the already devoted bark making towards the coast, and in fearful apprehension for its safety, stationed on the beach, he watched its progress, unappalled by the rude winds which would have struck a less firm soul with terror, or the rain, against which his friendly plaid was a weak security. Gladly he hailed the inmates of the castle, who every instant became more interested for the unhappy mariners, and who, in the meantime, had abandoned every hope of deliverance. Left to the mercy of an element over which nautical knowledge gave them no longer power, the little bark was in one instant

instant hurled into a frightful abyss, from which they expected to rise no more, and in the next as impetuously she bounded over billows that raised them to a height no less terrific.

They could plainly discern the castle lights, and trusted humanity would instigate the inhabitants to make some exertions in their favour; but the awful rocks which bounded the shore, and gave it a wild desolate appearance, were no less visible in the fearful lightning which played around them, as if to increase the horrors of their situation, by more plainly revealing the destruction from which there was no retreat.

“If it is a good sea-boat,” said one of their expecting friends, as they stood sheltered under a huge rock, “she will stand a better chance than a larger vessel, and may even yet outride the storm.”

“Peace!” said Glendairn, “was not that a fearful shriek?”

“In

“In troth, there are so many dreadful sounds,” said another of his companions, “that we must have good ears to distinguish them.”

At that moment piercing cries, borne on the howling blast, rendered all too clear.

“They are gone then,” said the disappointed Glendairn, “without being sensible that they had fellow-creatures so near, who would have done much to save them. Would that morning had but removed this dreadful darkness, for one might then have found the spot on which the vessel has dashed!”

Consonant to his generous wishes, the lightning supplied what nature had denied to them: a flash, which at once illuminated the vast expanse of water by its strong blue flame, reached the almost perpendicular rock on which the fatal bark was indeed stranded; but instantaneous darkness, rendered more horrible by the thunder which accompanied it, succeeded.

succeeded. They had, however, marked the spot, which was very near the castle's base, and one and all agreed to make their way thither, if haply some of the unfortunate wretches should be thrown on shore by the waves; but they had scarcely left the rocky recess, and again encountered the unceasing storm, when a friendly flash, on which alone they now depended for their own safety in exploring the way, and which they had been some minutes anticipating, darted its forked light on a tremendous wave, which was hurling towards their astonished sight, with incredible fury, a boat filled with people.

Amazed at a spectacle so unlooked for, they halted in anxious expectation of the result.

“Brave fellows!” said one.

“God speed them!” exclaimed another.

The wind blew directly for that part of the shore on which they stood; it was
there

there also less rocky, and they dared to hope the boat might reach it; but the eagerness of the sufferers to gain the shore, and their ignorance of the coast, induced them to make efforts which served but to increase their danger, and the heart-piercing cry, as the dividing waves engulphed the boat at the moment when they had almost insured her safety, nearly annihilated the little anxious band who stood ready to receive them. Happily, however, she had upset so near the shore, that those who could swim found little difficulty in gaining it, and that close to where Glendairn and his companions had stationed themselves, who now rushed forward with every probable means for their preservation.

The clouds, which had for so many hours formed as it were one impenetrable veil of darkness, were beginning to divide as the morning dawned, but the feeble light it afforded was still insufficient to aid their friendly efforts.

When

When the rain began to cease its violence, and the hitherto angry winds to abate their fury, eleven of the unhappy people who had embarked in the boat were already safe on the strand, but in such an exhausted state, that only one was able to answer Glendairn's first inquiry as to their whole number, which he said amounted to fourteen; it was therefore to be apprehended that three had too certainly perished when the boat upset, as they were persuaded all had left the vessel with them.

Lights were now seen approaching from the castle, and two of the servants, who had been dispatched by Sinclair, at lady Madeline's request, hastened with their orders, that if the crew of the distressed vessel, whose signals they had heard, had been enabled to reach the shore, they were to be instantly conducted by the domestics to the hall, where every comfort was preparing for their accommodation that could alleviate their situation.

situation. This welcome assurance of relief, and the yet more welcome light, enabled them to rally all the strength which fatigue, cold, and the terrors they had sustained, left them possessed of; and the first use made of it was, having thanked their humane deliverers, to ascertain which of their unfortunate shipmates were missing. Of those on the shore, an elderly man, said to be a passenger, was the only one who still remained in a senseless state; the rest consisted of the captain and seamen. The former having anxiously examined the whole party, became much agitated on discovering that among those lost was, as he said, the poor sick gentleman and his old servant—"And, by the power that saved me!" added the honest tar, "I had rather gone myself than be obliged to tell his friend we had not the means to save him; though at present," he continued, tenderly raising the aged gentleman as he spoke, "there is, I fear,

fear, but little chance of his surviving to ask for him; but if you, lads," turning to the sailors, "could contrive among you to convey him to the castle, some assistance might be rendered."

The servants feeling more equal to that task, insisted on conveying him thither, and entreated the poor fellows, one and all, to follow, cheering them with promises of the good fire and comforts which awaited them on their arrival.

The captain urged them to proceed, but declared his own intention of waiting until the morning, which was breaking fast, might enable him to discover if either of the sufferers had been washed on any part of the shore, as both wind and tide had set that way. "And it will be a satisfaction," he added, "should the poor old gentleman recover, to know that his young friend, should we find him, was at least decently buried; and yet I fear it will break his heart, for
during

during the voyage he was afraid of every breath of wind, lest it should make him worse, and, poor soul! he was indeed bad enough."

"But you don't stay alone, captain," said one of the sailors; "I have not stuck so many years by you, and weathered so many storms, to part with you now; we will therefore keep watch together, if you please—it will not be the first time, in as rough a gale as this."

"True, Ben," returned the captain, "and if we are fortunate enough to find either the gentleman, or our own poor fellows who went with him, I shall need your assistance."

"And that of more of us," said another of the seamen; "and all who are able are not less willing to stay with you than Ben."

"Of that I am satisfied, my good lads," he replied; "but I entreat you to get on with your friends as quick as possible,

possible, for the sooner you recruit yourselves, the sooner you can return to me and see what can be done."

When having assisted in placing his passenger in the arms of the servants, he hurried them away, happy that they were insured the comforts of which, though totally regardless, he was himself no less in want.—"We will now," he said to the two domestics who remained to accompany him to the castle, when he had satisfied himself as to the fate of the bodies he expected to find, "walk a little farther on this side of the coast;" for though nothing could be more wild than the clouds which moved above their heads, they emitted sufficient light to enable them to do so in more security; the sea roared less horribly, the wind had gradually subsided, and neither thunder nor lightning had succeeded the awful flash which had revealed the perilous situation of the boat after she had left the wreck, towards which
the

the intrepid Glendairn, to whom fear was a stranger, had bent his way. He had heard one of the sailors say, he did not believe the old man belonging to the sick gentleman had got into the boat when the rest did, for he remembered to have seen both him and the cabin-boy on the deck after he left it—but he might have followed in the confusion, which was dreadful.

Glendairn had left plenty to assist those who reached the shore, and heard the message delivered which secured them a comfortable asylum at the castle; and every humane and generous impulse urged him to speed his way to the wreck, if happily the sufferers, whose situation was rendered more wretched by being thus forsaken, still survived. Relying on his perfect knowledge of the coast, and the manual strength which rendered him equal to more than common deeds, he darted forward, flushed with the sanguine hope of being yet in
time

time to save a fellow-creature. He had taken a different route to that the no less generous captain and his companions had chosen, whose benevolent designs were however frustrated; for having in vain traced the shore, and carefully looked in every possible direction for the objects of their search, they had reluctantly turned their steps towards the castle, shivering under the weight of their drenched clothes, and not less sick at heart from fatigue and disappointment, when the captain, still anxiously looking towards the spot which had been so fatal to his vessel, and which was too discernible from the dark projecting rocks, whose iron surface proclaimed their desolating power, suddenly exclaimed—"What, under Heaven, is that moving towards us, for I cannot make out its form, and the size does not bespeak it man?"

"But it is a man," said one of the servants, "and such another in heart
and

and figure lives not in these parts. But tell me, Sandy," he said, turning to his fellow, "did not Glendairn gang to the castle with the strangers?"

"In faith, I trow not," Sandy replied; "he has little inducement for going thither at any time, and is always to be found where he is most wanted; nor do I doubt but he has found what we have been in search of, for you see he has something wrapped in his plaid, under whose weight he is bending."

"By Heavens! he is more than man," returned the captain, "if he has indeed thus nobly risked his life for a fellow-creature, and it can be nothing else he is supporting."

Each hurried forward, impatient to satisfy their curiosity, and assist the good fellow, as he was termed among them, who, not less pleased to have so unexpectedly met with assistance, and elate with the warm effusions of philanthropy that dilated his own breast, at
having

having been an instrument in the hands of Providence to rescue a being whose appearance had awakened the finest feelings of humanity, carefully laid down his burthen, and as gently unclosing the plaid, shewed to the still more delighted captain the pale emaciated form of the passenger in whose fate he was so warmly interested.

“ Ah ! it is indeed the poor gentleman,” he said, as the big tear darted over the rude furrows of his weather-beaten face ; “ but *his* fate was too certain—he could hardly be said to live when he first came on board, and the most robust of us will feel the effects of this drenching for some time to come ; however, it will, as I said, be a satisfaction to his friend, that even his poor corpse is found.”

“ His corpse !” said Glendairn, who having rested a few minutes, was preparing to raise him again in his arms ;

“truly he is worth twenty dead men yet, and a warm bed, with good nursing, and a little excellent cordial, when I get him home, will soon bring him about.”

“What do you mean?” asked the captain; “is he not really dead?”

“To be sure he is not,” returned Glendairn, “at least he was not when I first raised him on my shoulders, and the motion is more likely to do him good than otherwise; but I am again able to proceed, and shall move on quicker, now that we have more light, and you will be near to help me out if I should fail.”

Saying which, he again raised him in his sinewy arms.

“But where are you going to carry the gentleman?” inquired Sandy, as they proceeded onward; “to the castle?”

“In faith, I am not,” he returned; “they have quite enough to take care of already, and my mother will better attend

tend this poor soul ; besides, our house is much nearer, and the sooner he is placed in a hot bed the better for him."

"You are right," replied his comrade, "and Janet is better skilled in such matters than the women at the castle ; and whoever attends him faithfully will be well rewarded for their pains."

"I can tell you as much as that, my good fellow," said the captain.

"For your life, sir," returned Sandy, lowering his voice, "do not even hint such a thing—Glendairn is above want, and his proud spirit would instantly take fire at the promise of a reward."

Happily it had not reached his ears, for busily arranging in his own mind the steps he should take to recover the stranger, assisted by his good mother, of whose skill he had the highest opinion, he had not regarded what was said by the others.

A few minutes brought them to the dwelling inhabited by the warden's fa-

mily, who, assembled round an immense fire, were most anxiously anticipating Glendairn's return; for they well knew he would linger on the coast while there was any chance of his rendering the least service to the poor creatures, who from their signals of distress must require assistance; but though the same sentiments of humanity actuated every one of them, Glendairn was alone capable of going to the beach, as the only male branch beside himself and father, who resided at the castle, was a lad of eight years old, and who, with a spirit ardent as his brother's, would have accompanied him to the seaside, but for the commands of his mother, which confined him reluctantly to the house.

The whole party were received with true northern hospitality, and no time lost in placing the apparently dead or dying stranger in a comfortable bed; a cordial was next with much difficulty administered, his hands and feet chafed, and

and Janet almost ventured to affirm he would soon shew signs of life; but the captain, far less sanguine, having partaken of the cordial she so strongly recommended, and changed his clothes for some his good hostess had sent him, mournfully shook his head as he seated himself by the welcome fire to wait for farther information. It was some time before Glendairn joined him, but the visible satisfaction that marked his features foretold the glad tidings of which he was the bearer.

“ He lives then,” said the anxious captain, “ and owes his life to your humanity ?”

“ That is of little import,” replied Glendairn; “ he does live, but it is at present all we dare say; there is a beating at the heart, and a warmth creeping through the whole body, which if we can keep up, all will be well. When I first found him,” he added, “ I lost no time in turning him upon his face,

which relieved him from the water he had swallowed, but which, in truth, was no very great quantity. I was soon sensible he lived, and having wrapped him in my cloak, moved homeward as fast as possible, but having seen him in a fair way to do well, I must now finish my errand."

"And what may that be, brave fellow?" said the captain.

Glendairn related what the seamen had said respecting the old man and cabin-boy—"Of whom," he added, "I was going in pursuit when I nearly fell over the gentleman, who must have been thrown on shore by the waves, which had happily left him on the sand. I will now, however, proceed to the wreck, though I fear my help will come too late: when I first set out I might have saved them."

The captain did not believe they had been left on board—"If they were," he said, "it must have been their fears
which

which kept them, for being only fourteen in number, the boat would have held them all ; but they had no time to deliberate after she struck, and Heaven only knows," he said, " how any of us escaped at last."

Ben was of opinion that they certainly did remain on board, for he had not the least recollection of their being in the boat, and joyfully volunteered to accompany Glendairn to the rock ; the servants concluding it to be a fruitless search, returned to see how matters were going on at the castle ; and Glendairn having once more looked into the chamber with increased satisfaction, set out with his rough companion.

CHAPTER IV.
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MORNING smiling on the destruction of the past night, had chased from the vast expanse of heaven's etherial concave every cloud of sombre hue, and hushed every ruder breeze to a playful zephyr; even the stormy Forth, weary of its late convulsive motion, but dashed in sportive dalliance the gentle waves which a few hours since assumed gigantic forms; but on its deceptive surface there yet floated mementoes of its awful and subduing power—pieces of the wreck floating in every direction convinced them the vessel must have gone to pieces, in which case no hope of escape could have been left for the unhappy old man, and  
the



the luckless boy, had they remained in her when the crew left.

Glendairn and Ben had however reached the spot, where, as they were prepared to expect, not a vestige remained—"It is a fearful place," said the latter, "and a seventy-four would have stood no better chance than our poor little vessel, which for her size was an excellent sea-boat."

"Nor was yours the first by many," replied Glendairn, "which has been wrecked upon this dismal coast; but I never remember to have had such a storm, and only wonder that the boat outrode it so long."

Ben was beginning to explain the reason of her upsetting, when his eye rested upon a chasm in the rock, resembling a recess or cavern—"Why, this place," he exclaimed, stopping short in his account, "would have been large enough to receive ship and crew, if the wind had set

in for that shore, and we might have lain as snug as you please, high and dry, till the storm was over."

"It has often sheltered me," said Glendairn, "from a good shower when I was a boy; and as often, I am told, has concealed a good booty, for many a smuggler has left his cargo there for security."

"But such chaps are not given to leave their good things behind them, I suppose," replied the sailor, "else we might chance to come in for a prize; and in such cases, I believe, all's fish that comes to our net."

Glendairn, as he cast around him a look of disappointment, replied—"He believed the sea-fowl which inhabited the coast were of late years its chief inhabitants, if not its only tenants."

"And a devilish good birth the cunning rogues have chosen," returned Ben, "and by the noise they made last night, I should

I should think there must be a large family, for I never heard such a screaming in my life." He had by this time approached close to the entrance, when starting back, he exclaimed—"There is something more than birds at home now, however."

Glendairn eagerly advanced, and without waiting to reply, rushed into the cavern, near the mouth of which, clasped closely in each other's arms, and apparently in a sound sleep, lay the very beings of whom they had been in search. Ben's extravagant joy did not suffer them to remain long under its influence, and the poor boy starting up, looked wildly round him, as if still under the dominion of the terror which had rendered him so incapable of leaving the ship with his messmates. The old man, somewhat more collected, attempted also to rise, but his aged limbs, stiffened by remaining so long in damp clothes, made

it impossible ; yet his joy at seeing the sailor was not inferior to his own.

“ Why, my old hearty,” said Ben, shaking him kindly by the hand, “ you contrived to steer into a snug port here ; it should seem you and Tom were the best pilots after all.”

The old man, who had by this time partly collected his scattered ideas, eagerly demanded what had become of the boat’s crew, and why he saw only him ?

“ Oh, they are all safe, and in a good haven hard by,” he said ; “ but this good fellow,” pointing to Glendairn, “ hearing that you were left on board, insisted on coming to look for you ; for my own part, I saw no chance of your giving Davy the slip ; but had I known the old buck kept such good lockers as this, I should have had no fears for you or myself either.”

“ But my master?” said the old man, impatiently interrupting him.

“ And

“And his friend are both safe,” replied Glendairn, “and I trust will do well.”

Fixing an inquiring and anxious look upon him as he spoke, he said, with tears in his eyes—“Do not deceive a poor old man, who has no farther business with life, if they are indeed both gone.”

Glendairn again assured him that he had left one at the castle, and the other at his own home, where he would be as carefully attended; “and as that one happens to be your master,” he continued, “I shall conduct you to him, and the sooner the better, my good old friend, for this is not a place for you in your present condition;” for his clothes were still dripping, and his shivering limbs plainly told they had communicated their cold chills to a frame already palsied with age.

Again he attempted to quit his position, but with tears in his eyes declared himself incapable; the grateful boy  
would

would have assisted him, but Glendairn and Ben had already settled his mode of conveyance; and had soon the satisfaction of placing him in an easy chair at the hospitable fireside, to which the good captain was so much indebted, and who now, with an astonishment he could not suppress, had beheld their entrance, almost doubting his own sight.

Glendairn, without waiting to hear the praise bestowed upon his humane exertions, sought his mother, whom he still found by the stranger's side. He appeared to breathe more freely, and a genial warmth was diffused through the whole frame; but he neither opened his eyes nor spoke: still there was room for hope, and the generous fellow returned to assure his servant, that though, as might be expected from his master's state of health, which must, from his appearance, have been greatly impaired, he was too much exhausted to converse, yet he was nevertheless in a fair way of  
doing



doing well. "And though," he added, "I do not think it right he should be disturbed, particularly as he seems inclined to sleep, if you are not satisfied with my account, I will lead you into his room, but would rather advise your getting into a comfortable bed, and taking some refreshment and a little sleep, after which he may be glad to see you."

The old man gratefully acknowledged his goodness, and promised to do whatever he thought proper.

Ben, who thought his preservation, with that of the boy, little short of a miracle, had learned from the lad, in a few words, their little narrative—"Seeing the boat so full," he said, "he felt convinced that while the waves rose more than half mast high, it was impossible, so crowded, she could live in such a sea, and that if he must die, he would stay where he was; that the good old man, hearing what he said to his shipmates, who having shaken hands with him,

him, left him to his fate, had crossed the deck and come up to the binnacle, to which he was clinging for support, and implored him, with the greatest tenderness, to go with him ; ‘ for I cannot indeed,’ he added, ‘ my child, leave you here ; perhaps you have a mother to mourn for you, and they say we have a chance in the boat.’ But still wanting resolution to quit my hold, I insisted on his going before it was too late : finding all persuasion vain, he affectionately shook my hand, and was about leaving me, when by the lightning I perceived the boat already at some distance from the vessel. Frantically he wrung his hands, and called upon them, but his cries were lost in the howling wind, and though we gave ourselves up, he did not reproach me as the cause ; on the contrary, placing himself by my side, endeavoured to comfort me—made me join in prayers with him ; and in this state we clung to the wreck, every minute expecting

pecting our fate, but soon perceived the waves did not break so near us as at first, and by degrees left that part of the vessel on which we stood quite dry. The morning at length enabled us to see more clearly the rocks by which we were surrounded, and I perceived that with some caution we might creep from the wreck upon one which was more shelving than the rest; and this we resolved to do, in the hope we might step from one to another until we had got a sufficient distance from the sea. With much difficulty, for we were benumbed with cold and wet, we reached the shore; but our joy was great indeed when I discovered the cavern in the rock, into which we gladly proceeded, trusting that when it was broad day we should be able to reach some dwelling; but we were no sooner in safety ourselves than the fate of our poor messmates came into our minds, and not daring to hope they had survived the storm, I could not comfort

fort my old friend—he gave way to the most violent grief, calling on his dear master, and lamenting he had not shared his fate. Fatigue at length overpowered us: how long we had slept when you found us I cannot say; but I was little less frightened, when I first opened my eyes in such a place, than I had been on board, and the whole appeared like a strange dream.”

A messenger from Mr. Sinclair at that instant entered, charged with particular inquiries as to the state of the gentleman, and why he had not been carried with the rest of the party?

“Because,” replied Glendairn, “he required instant assistance: our house was much nearer—and I am proud to say that I think he is at this time in a much fairer way of recovery than he would have been, had we dragged him there.”

“Then there are hopes of him?” said the servant.

Glendairn

Glendairn replied in the affirmative, and that he trusted a few hours' quiet repose would bring him about finely.

He was then told, if any thing was required for him, they were to send to lady Madeline—"But you must not be surprised," added the man, "if you have a visitor in the course of the day, to judge for herself."

"Not her ladyship, I should think," returned Glendairn, "for she is not much used to such scenes."

"You are right," said the other; "but it should seem the lady who stays at the castle is; and lucky it has been for the poor fellows we carried there, that she had not left it before they arrived: another day, and she would have been gone; but she has now her hands full—and never was so kind a creature. I left them all blessing her for an angel, for she has attended them all in a manner that would have done your heart good to see her, and they are getting quite  
stout

stout; but the poor old gentleman is still too weak to leave his bed, though he has, I find, been more satisfied to remain in it, since Sandy brought intelligence of his friend being safe at your dwelling; and it is to satisfy his mind that I have been sent to know how you are getting on in this quarter."

"You may then return with an additional piece of news," replied Glendairn, "which will add to his satisfaction; for we have found the old man, who is servant to his friend, and who, with the poor boy, was left on board; so that but one unfortunate seaman has perished of the whole number."

Mrs. Duncannon, as the servant had related, was indeed actively employed. Deeply interested for the fate of the unhappy creatures exposed to the perilous storm, on a coast so unfavourable to shipping, she had listened with agony to every succeeding gun which announced their danger, and as impatiently  
waited



waited the return of the servants, who, she was informed, had gone to the beach; when, having descended with lady Madeline and Jessy to the drawing-room, they had inquired how the domestics were disposed of, in the event of their service being required?

Sinclair, whose senses were, from so many succeeding events, pretty well restored, having satisfied himself the change in his lordship was merely ideal, had sought his mother, trusting the present scene of confusion left him little to fear from Jessy having related what had passed, if she really intended to do so; in which case he had only to assert, the whole was a scheme on his part to deter her from paying a visit so highly improper, both on account of her own health, and the agitation into which he knew it would throw his lordship: but matters of greater import occupied the whole party. Lady Madeline's increasing agitation, and the fears which most of the female

male domestics laboured under, required all the strong arguments of Mrs. Duncannon, and the no less assiduous attention of Jessy, to combat—a task in which they were mutually engaged when the party arrived in the hall, to which she instantly proceeded, accompanied by Sinclair, who, desirous of impressing them with a due sense of his liberal hospitality as master of the domain, gave orders that the greatest care should be taken of the strangers, whose quality he next endeavoured to ascertain. All were mariners but the old gentleman, of whom they could give no other account, than that he was a passenger, and had come on board with a younger gentleman, who, together with his servant, was lost.

Happily the stranger was still in a state of stupefaction, or the account thus given of his friend would have annihilated the faint hopes of existence, which still whispered he might  
recover

recover with proper care: this was not wanting—with her accustomed presence of mind, Mrs. Duncannon gave the attendants such instructions as she deemed requisite respecting him, and when placed in bed, again visited him; but nearly two hours had elapsed before there appeared any symptoms of returning sense; he then turned his languid eyes towards her, with an expression that evinced his wish to speak; but it was some minutes before he could articulate, in a voice scarcely to be understood, the inquiry he was so anxious to make after his young friend.

Judging it would be the first effort, and but ill prepared to answer a point so important at that moment, Mrs. Duncannon waited in trembling expectation of what she so much dreaded to hear: at length he said—“Tell me, is he lost for ever?”

Deception was at that instant admissible, and she replied, in gentle accents  
—“We

—“ We have not lost all hopes; the servants are not yet returned.”

But the powers of recollection, as they revived, brought with them a more perfect recollection of past horrors, and as quickly convinced him, that if he was not already in the same dwelling with himself, it was not possible he could have escaped the waves: there was agony in the thought, to which his present weakness was unequal, and a temporary delirium succeeded, during which he insisted upon going in search of his lost friend, or, as he termed him, the dear suffering boy.

At a loss to conjecture if it was indeed his son, or a friend only, she became doubly anxious to learn if any tidings had been obtained respecting him, when Mary, gliding into the room, related, in a low voice, the news with which Sandy had returned; but he was no longer in a state to receive the welcome tidings: exhausted nature at length yielded to  
the

the fatigue he had endured, and a restless slumber succeeded; from which, however, he awoke more composed, and again fixed his inquiring eyes upon Mrs. Duncannon, who, better prepared to satisfy him, anticipated his question with an assurance that his friend had been conveyed to a residence just by; and although, as he might from his own situation suppose, too unwell to come to him, he was not in a less favourable state than himself—"I must therefore entreat," she added, "that you will now, sir, take such refreshment as will most conduce to your recovery, and endeavour to obtain the rest of which you stand so much in need."

"I will do every thing, madam, you require," he said, respectfully taking her hand, "and want words to express my gratitude; but my dear boy!"

"You have promised to obey my commands," she replied, "and I must impose silence: having seen you take

this draught, I will leave you, to make farther inquiries respecting him; but only on a promise that you compose yourself during my absence, which shall be short."

Thanking her more by looks than words, he closed his eyes, and she retired, to see if the seamen had received every attention due to their situation.

All were provided with comfortable beds, to which they had retired in good spirits; and, with lady Madeline's permission, a servant was dispatched to inquire the state of the stranger. Sinclair added his commands, that he would also ask by what authority Glendairn had thought proper to convey him to his own abode, when the rest had been conducted to the castle? to which, in his name, the captain also was to be invited.

A plain rough sailor, unaccustomed to the society of those beyond his own sphere, he had felt quite at home beneath



neath the friendly roof of the brave Glendairn, whom he thought the finest fellow in the world; and while grateful for the message, said, as he had no relish for great people and castles, he would, though not less obliged to the young lord, as he supposed he was a lord, with his leave, stay where he was; that he owed him many thanks for his great kindness to his poor fellows, and should be proud to return them in person when they were about to depart; but at present begged to be excused from waiting on him.

Gratified by assurances that the young stranger was doing well, Mrs. Duncan-non again returned to her patient, who anxiously expected her, and was himself, though gradually, evidently recovering as much as the time could admit of: he listened with pleasure to her account of his friend, and, for the first time, inquired to whom he was indebted for the great attention paid to himself?

Having told him her name, she added —“ The family under whose roof you are, and to whom I also am a guest, are not less interested in your recovery than myself; both lady Madeline Sinclair and her son are happy in having it in their power to become thus serviceable, and only regret your young friend is yet too weak to be removed to Tantallan Castle.”

“ Tantallan !” replied the invalid, with an eagerness which did not escape Mrs. Duncannon; “ am I then in Tantallan Castle, the seat of lord Malcolm ?”

Mrs. Duncannon replied in the affirmative; but believing him still too weak to converse, did not encourage his doing so by any further remark.

After a few minutes silence, he requested to know what the distance might be from the castle to the house where his friend had been conveyed?

Merely, she said, a walk; and that if she found him quite as well towards evening, it was her intention to visit him

him at the warden's, that she might satisfy herself as to the progress of his recovery, and should make her report accordingly on her return.

“Your great humanity, madam,” he replied, “and kindness to myself, had induced me to entreat you would add to the obligation I already owe you, the benevolent office you have thus volunteered; I should certainly be more happy if I knew your real opinion of my friend's condition, since incapable of judging for myself; and I entreat you to assure him, that I trust a few hours' rest will enable me to visit him in person. How deeply I regret our having been separated !”

Promising to be a faithful messenger, Mrs. Duncannon, in the evening, set out, attended by a servant, to the dwelling of Glendairn, whom, with his mother, she found seated by the bedside of the stranger, whose situation appeared, at a cursory view, much more alarming

G 3

than

than that of his friend: a pale, emaciated hand, which lay motionless on the coverlid, bespoke the wasted frame of which it formed a part; while the hollow sunken eyes, and lengthened features, as plainly told that even years of pain must have conspired to make such ravage; and Mrs. Duncannon, the tear of commiseration bedewing her eye as she looked upon him, only wondered that the recent fatigue of such a night of horrors had not finally snapped the thread of that existence, which, even before the fatal shipwreck, must have been so nearly exhausted—"Has he spoke?" she said, addressing the mother of Glendairn.

"But once, madam," she replied, "to ask where he was; when my son, thinking it would be a relief to him to know his friend was safe, having answered his question, added, that the other gentleman had been carried to the castle of lord Malcolm, and was doing very well. I fancy," she

she continued, " he was then in much pain, for without attending to what was told him, he only said, ' Merciful God !' and for some minutes after I could perceive tears in his eyes, since which he has lain just as you see ; and indeed, madam, I have been afraid to speak, for it should seem the slightest fatigue, nay, a breath, would deprive him of life."

" He is very ill," Mrs. Duncannon replied ; " but I trust a little good nursing and care, neither of which, I am convinced," she added, looking around his comfortable chamber with visible satisfaction, " has been wanting, that a few days will see him quite another thing ; I shall be happy to share your attendance on him—and, once sufficiently restored to be conveyed to the castle, have no doubt but he will do well."

Raising his heavy eyes to her face, and moving his lips, as if in the act of speaking, she placed her head near his pillow, that the exertion to himself

might be less. In a voice both weak and hoarse, from the violent cold he had taken in the water, he said—"Pardon me, madam; did you speak of removing me to the castle?"

"Not in your present state, sir," she answered; "it would be attended with too much danger; in a few days, perhaps."

"I thank you," he replied; "but it must not be; I have here all I can want—too probably," he added, with a sigh, "all I shall ever want. But, my friend, as you pity me, urge him to come before it is too late; and tell him, if possible, not to come alone—he will understand you. Do not deceive him as to my health; the last sand is almost expended—it lingers but for a last sad interview. Fatal storm! But it is Heaven's decree, and I must submit."

He ceased speaking; and Mrs. Duncannon, more than ever interested in his preservation, convinced that only proper  
restoratives,



restoratives, and that cautiously but frequently administered, could prolong, even for the desired time, an existence so far spent, entreated him to take the nourishment she had brought for him, and which had already so far recruited his friend's strength, that she had no doubt of his being able to visit him on the following day.

A gleam of satisfaction irradiated the ghastly features of the stranger as she spoke; he took the offered draught, and, after a short pause, said her good medicine had already enabled him to thank her for the still greater consolation derived from her account of his friend—"Is it," he added, "to any part of lord Malcolm's family I am indebted?"

Mrs. Duncannon answered, that as the particular friend of lady Madeline Sinclair, she was at present a visitor only in the family, and was happy that she had not left it at a period when she could render herself in the least service-

able to her ladyship's more unfortunate guests.

“ With the same sentiments of humanity,” replied the stranger, “ lady Madeline might have been induced to become the companion of your inquiries relative to the sufferers not under her own roof.”

So thought Mrs. Duncannon—but, with a feeling heart and truly charitable disposition, her ladyship wanted that energy of mind that so nobly distinguished her friend—that prompt avidity with which she ever executed whatever the impulse of her own heart dictated as proper to be done. Lady Madeline, anxious that every comfort should be administered to the suffering men, gave orders that the utmost attention should be paid to their situation; Mrs. Duncannon was herself present, and supplied the wants of each; but aware that this want of exertion on the part of her fair hostess was to be imputed more to the  
difference

difference of their past lives and early education than to any other source, and sincerely attached to her, she assured the stranger she had not sufficiently recovered the alarm into which her spirits had been thrown on the preceding night, which, she said, was sufficient to appal those whose health and strength rendered them more equal to the task.

The stranger sighed heavily, but remained silent; and Mrs. Duncannon, having left such directions as she deemed expedient with Glendairn's mother, and which were gratefully received by the good woman, whom she promised to see again on the following day, she returned to the castle, deeply ruminating on words, which now occurred with more force to her recollection. If, as evidently, entire strangers to the family at the castle, whom could he possibly expect to accompany his friend? for no one but the ship's crew had been conveyed thi-

ther with himself; and why so reluctant to be removed from the warden's, when apparently so anxious for the presence of his friend? There was a degree of mystery which awakened an interest she could not suppress, and which, together with the feeble and melancholy situation of the gentleman she had just left, and the no less interesting manners of the elderly one at the castle, determined her to postpone her journey at least for a few days, which it was probable would, in some measure, decide the fate of the younger one, who appeared to her in the last stage of a decline.

Relieved from a weight of anxiety by the accounts she brought of his fellow-sufferer, and his strength recruited by a comfortable night's rest, Mrs. Duncannon's patient was enabled, on the following morning, to join the family at their breakfast hour, where Sinclair, having formally introduced him to lady Madeline, Mrs. Duncannon, and Jessy,  
again

again bade him welcome to the castle, though regretting the circumstance which had thus given them the honour of his company ; still more that the stupid rascals had not brought his friend there also, instead of taking him to the habitation of the warden's family, who were notwithstanding, he said, good kind of people, and would do every thing in their power to serve him—" We must, however," he added, " insist upon his being removed hither as soon as, having seen him yourself, you may think proper, as we shall expect you to take up your abode with us at least until your friend is perfectly recovered, and as long after as you may find it convenient to do so ; as, although the present state of my grandfather's health precludes the possibility of his entertaining you, that honour will descend on lady Madeline and myself ; and I trust you will find our hospitality such as every stranger would

would be warranted to expect from the family of lord Malcolm."

The stranger gracefully bowed his thanks, acknowledged his present obligations, and accepted, with much apparent satisfaction, Sinclair's offer of remaining at the castle, until his friend should be enabled to proceed—"But, indeed," he said, "I am apprehensive this dreadful accident will be attended with fatal consequences to him in his present state of health, which was, when we embarked, scarcely equal to the fatigue of even so short a voyage, but which necessity, and the advice of his physicians, obliged us to take, as he had business to transact in the north, which required his immediate presence; and they were of opinion the passage by water would be of service, and at all events less fatiguing than land-carriage."

"Oh, we will have him conveyed  
hither,"



hither," said lady Madeline; "and you, my dear Mrs. Duncannon, must positively put off this journey of yours for a short time, that among us we may have the credit of raising this poor invalid: there is more efficacy in good nursing than in medicine, and I assure you," she said, addressing their visitor, "we will all do our best; but there are very few such nurses as this lady," turning to Mrs. Duncannon; "Jessy and I will take our part, and thus attended, your friend cannot fail to do well."

The stranger replied—"To that lady's merits as a nurse, and her goodness as an angel, his present health bore ample testimony; and with two such lovely assistants," he added, glancing his eyes from lady Madeline to Jessy, "he had every thing to expect for his poor friend, whom, with their permission, he would then visit, as he was become impatient to see him, and not less so to convey their humane offers."

Sinclair

Sinclair apologized for not accompanying him at that time, though professing himself anxious to see the stranger, as lord Malcolm, from whom he was seldom absent long together, would be expecting him; and Mrs. Duncannon did not offer to do so, lest her presence should be a restraint on the interview; as the more she ruminated, the more forcibly it struck her that there was something mysterious about the strangers; yet if at all connected with the family into which they had been thrown by a casualty so dreadful, would not the one who was so far recovered have made more inquiries relative to lord Malcolm? She fancied she had more than once caught his eyes fixed on Jessy with an expression of more than common inquiry: this, in a younger man, might have been attributed to her exquisite beauty; and her conjecture was probably the effect of that restless anxiety in her own breast to

to connect every occurrence with the interest of her lovely *protégée*.

But he went alone to the warden's; and having passed some hours with his friend, on his return appeared more sanguine than Mrs. Duncannon believed him justified in being—"He had found him," he said, "very low, but he did not think his symptoms more alarming; and his spirits are raised from the expectation of your promised visit, my dear madam, which I left him anticipating with much impatience; for, like myself, his faith is built upon your excellent abilities, not only as a nurse, but a physician, and he refuses any prescription but yours. I have, therefore, not ventured to ask if medical aid should be called in."

Mrs. Duncannon professed herself ready to perform her promise—"And as you know," she said, gaily, "so much depends on faith, I shall, from such high encomiums on my poor abilities, which  
are,

are, indeed, overrated, nevertheless expect to work wonders. Therefore, do not be surprised, lady Madeline, if you should have another inmate of the castle in a few days."

"And it will be nothing short of a miracle which can effect such an event," said the stranger, "for at present he can with difficulty but move in his bed."

"But is it not possible to remove his bed hither?" replied lady Madeline; "for I am still persuaded he would do better at the castle. However," she continued, "as I am impatient to see this patient, in whom we are all so interested, I will accompany you, Mrs. Duncannon, and judge for myself."

Mrs. Duncannon at that moment looked at their guest; a slight agitation marked his features, and she fancied he appeared disappointed.

But in an instant recovering himself, he said—"Your ladyship is very good:

good; but unless, indeed, accustomed to scenes like this, I fear your gentle nature will be ill prepared for the melancholy spectacle which will meet your eyes; and your probable agitation might be productive of serious consequence in his present situation; for, as the good woman, who is his attendant, observes, you would, from his exhausted state, be induced to suppose that the smallest exertion must deprive him of existence, so frail appears the tenure of *his* just now. Still, I trust, a few days' undisturbed quiet will do much for him, when I shall gratefully accept your ladyship's offer (if it is practicable) of removing him to the castle."

Lady Madeline, perfectly satisfied, acquiesced in the propriety of his remark, and relinquished her design of going to the warden's, to which place Mrs. Duncannon, attended by the stranger, set out, just as the captain, who, with his men, being perfectly recovered from  
their

their fatigue, entered the hall to return their thanks, and to take leave of their kind benefactors, previous to their leaving that part of the north.

## CHAPTER V.

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THE stranger having said a few words apart to the captain, shook him heartily by the hand; and after expressing, with Mrs. Duncannon, his warmest wishes for the future welfare of the whole party, proceeded onward, remarking, they were a set of worthy fellows, who had behaved like heroes throughout the storm, making every exertion to preserve their vessel, while there was a possibility of their doing so; and that he lamented most sincerely even one of them should
have

have been lost—"This reminds me," he added, "of that noble fellow—the warden's son, I understand he is, but for whom, in future, I hold myself bound to provide, not only for his conduct in preserving my beloved friend, who, but for him, must inevitably have perished, but for the undaunted perseverance with which he also saved our old servant and the cabin-boy, both of whom, during the confusion, had been left on board the vessel."

It was the first time Mrs. Duncannon had heard the circumstance; and seeing the boy alluded to among the group they had just left, she inquired what had become of the servant, whom she did not recollect to have seen at the castle?

The stranger replied, Glendairn had taken him to his own house—"But I much fear," he added, "if the poor old man will not fall a sacrifice yet; for notwithstanding the humanity of his preserver,

server, when I left him this morning a raging fever had rendered him incapable of knowing that I was attending his bedside. 'Tis very unfortunate," he continued, "for independent of his faithful services, his life, at this period, is of no small moment to his unfortunate master."

As if conscious that there was an ambiguity in his words that could not escape the penetration of his companion, he said—"I have already, madam, observed, that business of some importance to my friend brought us to the north, from the result of which I had augured the most favourable consequences to his health, and to which nothing could so effectually contribute as a mind at ease. But the dispensations of Providence are inscrutable, although, experience evinces, just; yet this unfortunate shipwreck has left me at a loss *how* to act—perhaps every delay teems with danger to my friend; and yet, such is his situation, that a moment even might frustrate all
that

that my friendship would risk to save him, for he is unequal to the smallest exertion; and yet how much will be required on his part! But I ought to apologize for the selfish conversation I have forced on you, madam, when gratitude and admiration were themes more suited to the obligations I owe you—the former is always better felt than expressed; but I must be permitted to say, for at my time of life I may be privileged to do so with impunity, that under one roof I have never before met three such beings in form and face. It should seem that nature, as if envious of what time might steal from the features of my lovely hostess, and her no less lovely guest, has concentrated every charm of theirs in the blooming girl I this morning saw in company with them; and from her likeness to lady Madeline, I might be induced to ask if she is a relative?”

Mrs.

Mrs. Duncannon's heart beat high, as she answered, that his extreme eulogium had almost prohibited her acknowledging, with her accustomed pride, that Jessy was an adopted daughter of her own, lest he should infer, that believing her really possessed of vanity, he had discovered, and successfully attacked, the most vulnerable part.

Their arrival at the warden's left no room for the reply he was about making; and the smile with which Glendairn met them announced a favourable report of the invalid.

They proceeded instantly to his chamber, where they found him even better than their most sanguine expectation had led them to hope. His feeble hand was extended to Mrs. Duncannon, and he pressed hers with fervour. To her inquiries of his health, he answered with a degree of cheerfulness, and his eyes were lightened up with an expression

sion of pleasure very different to the heaviness which had oppressed them on her last interview.

“ Did you expect more visitors ?” said his friend, with a smile ; “ indeed, if I could have surmised such an improvement in your appearance, I should have been less cautious than I was to her ladyship, whom I actually forbade coming to see you for at least three or four days, on a supposition that you were too weak to admit more friends than the fair one who had before visited you, and whom you were so anxious to see again.”

“ Surely with reason,” returned the invalid ; “ for I owe her more than life—she brought me comfort ; but I promised you to acquire all the fortitude I could summon against your return, and could have seen lady Madeline, had she honoured me so far.”

“ Indeed !” said his friend, “ quite heroic ! and you would have seen a very lovely woman, warmly interested in

your recovery ; but since you behave so well, if you promise to keep your spirits free from every agitation, I will not only allow you to see lady Madeline, but a still far more lovely being—the adopted daughter of this lady ; and with three such attendants, if you do not speedily get health and strength, I shall be tempted to disown you for an unprofitable servant, and e'en trudge back to London alone.—But how comes on our poor old man ?”

“ In truth, very ill, sir,” replied Glendairn, who just then entered the room ; “ my mother is at this time with him ; but I should be happy if madam,” looking towards Mrs. Duncannon, “ would just step in and give her opinion—his fever runs very high, and he knows no one.”

Professing her readiness to do so, Glendairn led the way : but neither the darkened room, the fever, which, raging in every vein, gave a wildness to the eyes that rolled insensibly around, nor the
unshorn

unshorn beard, could afford even temporary concealment to features so well remembered, so indelibly impressed on the strong mind of Mrs. Duncannon, who at one moment recognized in the patient sufferer the long-lost partner of the sorrowing Margretta, her good and still faithful Donald.

Too much astonished to speak, she eagerly looked round for the stranger, to certify the reality of her own conviction; but he had remained in his friend's chamber, and a moment sufficed to summon her undeviating attendant, resolution, which, thrown off her guard by a sight not less extraordinary than unexpected, had for that moment only deserted her.

A thousand vague conjectures rose to her imagination; but the time admitted not of her arranging them to her satisfaction; they, however, came in a form so replete with hope, that she cherished the fond suggestion with ecstasy, satis-

fied that a very short period must clear every doubt in her own mind, and determined patiently to await the stranger's explanation, which, she could not hesitate to believe, would bear some coincidence to Jessy's fate.

Though grieved to see the present state of Donald's health, she trusted Providence, for its own wise purposes, would spare him, and rather rejoiced that his situation precluded his knowledge of her, well knowing his joy at seeing her would have been too sincere to be repressed, and might probably have clashed with the designs of the gentleman said to be his master, from whom also for the present she resolved to conceal the discovery she had made; but having again joined them, and being questioned as to her opinion of his danger, she replied, in the warmth of her own wishes—that although he had much fever, she was an avowed enemy to despair, therefore could not relinquish her full confidence

confidence that his kind hostess would have the satisfaction of seeing him able to attend his master in a short time. "Judging from his years," she added, "I should suppose him a favourite servant."

"His value to my friend, madam," said the elder stranger, "is above price. If he is spared, you will be better acquainted with the excellent qualities of his heart. Should we lose him——"

"Heaven avert such a blow to my fondest hopes!" returned the invalid, interrupting him; "I dare not anticipate such a trial at this period."

"Nor need you," his friend answered; "for with this lady, I will venture to prophesy, that for his own sake, if not for ours, the good Donald will be restored to health."

Had Mrs. Duncannon wanted confirmation, this would have sufficed; and the repetition of a name so respected by herself—so important to Jessy, awakened every finer feeling of her expecting
H 3 heart.

heart. Scarcely could she restrain the impulse that so strongly induced her to ask from whence he came, and why he had been thus long from his family? But there was, she thought, an indelicacy in the question, since it might, too probably, embarrass those to whom it was addressed, by obliging them to reveal more than at present they appeared disposed to do; and she restrained the desire as selfish; the return of Donald's senses must, she well knew, explain his story, for he would not be long in discerning that she was so near him, and for this period she determined to wait, unless, indeed, the certainty of his death obliged her to seek an explanation from those under whose protection he evidently was.

At the dinner-hour, having promised to pass the night with his friend, the elder stranger and Mrs. Duncannon returned to the castle. Sinclair performed the honours of the table in high spirits;
professed

professed himself much pleased with the favourable report made of the invalid, who, he joined his mother in trusting, would be soon enabled to make one at their family repast; and again lamented lord Malcolm's inability to add his welcome to their's, the stranger having inquired how long his lordship had been thus indisposed? but without asking the nature of his indisposition, changed the subject, and the conversation became general.

Towards evening, Mrs. Duncannon had the satisfaction of hearing, by the servant she had sent to Glendairn, that Donald had been some hours in a heavy sleep, and that the gentleman continued quite as well as she had left him at noon. When each party, therefore, had retired for the night, she accompanied Jessy to her own room, and in confidence revealed to her, not only the discovery she had made respecting Donald, but her own surmises that they might prepare
H 4 themselves

themselves for still farther and not less important events from the strangers, when the health of the younger enabled him to leave the warden's.

“ I am not,” she said, “ apt to draw hasty conclusions, nor can I think my judgment in this instance misled, when it induces me to believe their business lies within the precincts of these walls.”

Jessy's heart palpitated as she inquired if she could possibly judge who the gentlemen were; and, in the same breath, asked, if the younger was as prepossessing in his manners as the one at the castle?

“ His present situation,” she replied, “ renders him infinitely more interesting; for sickness has made dreadful ravage in a face that has, I have no doubt, once been handsome, though very unlike that of his friend, whose countenance I think very fine.”

“ But can you for a moment believe it possible, my dear madam,” said Jessy, with

with increasing agitation, "that either of them——"

Here she paused.

Unwilling to raise an expectation in the bosom of her young friend, although unable to repress it in her own, and anxious to confine what she had imparted to themselves, she said—"Mark me, Jessy. I have told you on what grounds my surmises are rested, but remember, they are still surmises only, save the reality of Donald's presence, on whose recovery much depends, for he at least is restored to us; and knowing how much that circumstance would rejoice you, I could not conceal it. Relying also upon your excellent understanding, I ventured to go still farther, by telling you what has passed relative to the strangers; but I would not have lady Madeline, and much less Mr. Sinclair, made acquainted with my suggestions, which, if right, they will hear from the strangers themselves, who, I

almost venture to predict, are friends, interested in the welfare of your father."

A shade of disappointment checked the evanescent rays of hope which had ventured to draw them even nearer to her heart than by the cords of friendship.

Of this Mrs. Duncannon was aware, therefore changing the subject, said—"These events, however they may terminate, have determined me to remain yet a few days longer, in which time I trust our good Donald will accompany us, for that at least follows, and I already anticipate the additional value it will give our return in the heart of poor Margretta."

Jessy acquiesced in this opinion; but her imagination was so wholly absorbed in what she had heard, that she entirely forgot it had been her intention to acquaint Mrs. Duncannon with the transaction which had occurred in her attempt to see lord Malcolm, and which
until

until this evening she had no opportunity of doing. Mary's sincere penitence, and her fear of lady Madeline's dismissing her, had influenced Jessy to promise she would not reveal the occurrence—a promise she the more readily made, from a conviction, not only of her being, from long habit, of consequence to her ladyship, but that a further development of her son's unworthy conduct, who was far more culpable than the simple girl, could not fail to give her fresh affliction, and add to her already depressed spirits.

Sinclair had passed it off with his usual effrontery, and the confusion which had reigned ever since in the castle had left him no opportunity of noticing her. But from Mrs. Duncannon she had no secrets—this she meant to reveal, as a stimulus to hasten their departure from Tantallan; and she had heard, with deep regret, lady Madeline entreat that the journey might be deferred. But the

wish to commence it was now past, and her former dread of remaining beneath its roof no longer remembered.

Retired to her pillow, she retraced every word her friend had uttered; new sensations dilated her breast; imagination wandered in the wild delirium of anticipated blessings, and never had she passed a night so truly happy in the castle.

She arose early, and as the family were not stirring, strolled to the garden, where legible traces of the late storm were too visible: destroyed shrubs, trees torn from the earth in wild disorder, met her sight, but it ill accorded with the harmony which then reigned in her bosom; and she was moving towards the castle, when the elder stranger appeared at a small distance. He had at that moment formed no inconsiderable share of her thoughts, and anxious to know how his friend had passed the night, she hastened.

tened towards him, with the fleetness of a sylph, to make inquiries in which she was so deeply interested.

But though he assured her, with many thanks, that he had left him still mending, and with a smile expressed his own admiration of the lovely glow of health which animated her countenance, and beamed in her eyes, she fancied he appeared more thoughtful, and that a mournful expression, in defiance of his apparent efforts to conceal it, hovered over his brow, not, she thought, unmixed with anger. Still he conversed on their way to the castle, and among other subjects mentioned Sinclair—spoke in high terms of his hospitality, and the affectionate attention to lord Malcolm, as related by himself, and which obliged him to pass a life so ill adapted to his age and expectations—"For he is, I am given to understand, his lordship's sole heir."

He could not have chosen a subject
more

more hateful to her than that of Sinclair, and its purport threatened to shake the airy fabric she was rearing.

But when he added—"Glendairn tells me lord Malcolm's son was a much finer young man—I lament his death," thrown off her guard, she said, with some emotion—"Oh, do not say he is dead, for that would destroy a thousand hopes!"

"*How!*" he returned—"Is not his death the cause of lord Malcolm's derangement? But perhaps I am wrong in speaking thus candidly of a circumstance which I believe I was also told was not generally known."

"All then is over!" thought Jessy. "Ah! my dear friend, how have you deceived yourself as to these welcome messengers! I have no longer a father!" and the unbidden tear started in her eye.

"You, at least, are deeply interested in the family affliction," continued the stranger,

stranger, fixing his eyes upon her as he spoke, "and the castle must be a solitary residence even for you."

"I did not think it so," she said, "while I was permitted to contribute to his lordship's comforts; but now, that he is too ill to admit of my attendance, I shall not be sorry when Mrs. Duncannon sets out, deeply as I regret leaving her ladyship."

"You are, then, attached to lady Madeline?"

"Who that knew her goodness could be otherwise? And I——"

She suddenly checked herself, and said—"I forgot to ask after the poor old man this morning, and Mrs. Duncannon will be very anxious to hear of him."

"He, too, is doing well, my sweet girl," said the stranger, "and I thank you for this kind interest in his fate, but regret that our walk is so nearly ended, for there is a subject in which I am much interested, and which, had our
time

time permitted, I should have named to you; but we may have another opportunity, of which I shall not fail to avail myself."

Their arrival at the castle, by putting an abrupt end to the conversation, left Jessy at a loss to conjecture what might be the purport of the communication he alluded to. On passing through the court-yard, she had observed Sinclair at the window of his own apartment, and when he joined them at the breakfast-table, fancied there was something like suspicion in the looks he occasionally directed towards her; but unconscious of their meaning, she disregarded them, and more minutely observed those of the stranger, who, notwithstanding his efforts to appear cheerful, was decidedly less so than on the foregoing day.

Sinclair remarked, that the good report of his friend's health half induced him to ask if a male visitor might hope to be admitted, should he call at the warden's,

warden's, as, though his presence would be less beneficial than that of the ladies, he felt a strong desire to pay his personal respects, if permitted to do so?

The stranger replied, his friend would feel honoured by the attention; and although Sinclair had an insuperable aversion to Glendairn, whom he termed an insolent rascal, and who had some private ends to answer in conveying the stranger to his own abode, a degree of curiosity determined him to call there in the course of the day; and he had now no alternative, notwithstanding a sensation, almost as powerful, whispered him there was danger in his leaving the castle while it contained other inmates than the family; but it also contained a second Argus, to whose care his wretched prisoner had been too often committed to leave him any fear on that head.

The stranger, therefore, having, by the persuasion of lady Madeline and Mrs. Duncannon, retired to his own room to
take

take a little rest, after sitting up the preceding night with his friend, Sinclair paid a visit to his lordship, previous to that he was to make at the warden's, which immediately followed.

But the events of the past night had rendered his guest a stranger to sleep. Glendairn, the brave Glendairn, a friend to every good and noble cause, but the avowed enemy of Sinclair, had been his companion during those hours in which his friend reposed; and, led on by the judicious inquiries of the stranger, doubly urged by his own thirst of revenge upon a being whom he impatiently panted to unmask, but which he had hitherto wanted the means to do, he explained scenes of villany, treachery, and cruelty, with which he was well acquainted, but from the account of which his auditor shrunk appalled.

A recital so calculated to raise every manly feeling in a breast far less interested than that to which it was revealed,
claimed

claimed a return of confidence, and he became at once the repository of a secret which transported him to a delirium of joy that for a short time baffled all restraint. But reason having pointed out the necessity of deliberation, he checked the almost ungovernable transports that actuated him; and having voluntarily vowed that fealty to his new friends which Sinclair could never extort from him, they parted, mutually pleased with each other.

But though Glendairn's information had rendered the stranger restless and uneasy, circumstances as yet rendered it impossible for him to arrange any plan of proceeding to his satisfaction, and he had almost mechanically wandered from his own room into the picture-gallery which adjoined it, before he became sensible that he had done so. A portrait of lord Malcolm first arrested his attention, and he continued for some time to gaze upon features to which he was no stranger,

ger,

ger, wholly absorbed in reflections which had indeed become painful, when slowly crossing his arms, he walked onward, still buried in thought, and totally unmindful, that although every winding passage and lengthened gallery of Tantallan Castle was known to him, he was himself less known to the inhabitants, and was now trespassing on the privileges which, as a guest beneath its roof, he was by the laws of hospitality allowed. But propriety was no longer regarded, and he had already reached a remote wing of the building, when a door was suddenly opened, and a figure wrapped in a loose dressing-gown darted forth with a velocity that startled him.

In a moment it flew towards him, and in tones of deep distress, exclaimed—
“Save me, as you expect mercy!”

Too well acquainted with the voice and form, the face alone could stagger his belief: grief and unmerited treatment had usurped the power of age,
and

and altered every once-remembered feature—wild insensibility glared in the extended eyeballs, and terror palsied every limb.

“Take me to Jessy!” he continued, looking fearfully around him, “she only will know where to hide me from him.”

“From whom?” said the agitated stranger, approaching him, “from whom, my lord, shall I save you?”

“From Sinclair—*Hush!*” he continued, glancing his eager eyes through the gallery, “he will be here before you find Jessy—they tell me she is sick. Come—delay will ruin us.”

Before his friend (the fibres of whose heart were wrung with anguish) could recover himself, lord Malcolm, uttering a fearful shriek, sprung from him, and pursued his way through the long gallery.

At that instant the stranger perceived Sinclair entering from the other end, and, with quickened steps, following the fugitive;

fugitive; rage reddened his features, and a thousand curses, his uncontrolled passion could not restrain, burst from his lips against the wretch to whose care he had confided his lordship, and whose neglect had thus exposed what it was so much his interest to conceal.

Hastily apologizing to his guest, he passed on; but the latter, though with different sensations, followed also. It was no longer possible to dissemble—the veil had been more prematurely drawn aside than for some reason he had wished it should be, but he felt it was no longer possible to replace it: resentment had supplanted caution, and from that moment he vowed to rescue the miserable friend of his early years (whose every fault he forgave), from the tyranny of his unprincipled relation, whose sight he already abhorred.

Quickening his step, therefore, he continued to retrace his way, until, within a few paces of his own room, he beheld
Sinclair

Sinclair and one of the servants forcibly retaining the unhappy maniac, who, from his exertion, was still evidently struggling, though in silence, for liberty.

The backs of the whole party were towards him, and the infuriate Sinclair, as was ever the case when passion seized the reins, forgetting every thing but the immediate cause of his violence, no longer remembered that in the next gallery he had left the stranger, who, it was possible, might be induced to follow him, and become a further witness of his conduct.

Impatient to drag him back to the dreary prison from which either the perfidy or neglect of his servant had thus emancipated him, and where only he could punish his captive with impunity, he had tried gentle means, but neither that nor force had succeeded: the well-remembered chain preyed upon the broken yet unsubdued spirit of lord Malcolm; and exasperated by his obstinacy,

nacy, urged on by desperation, Sinclair had raised his hand over the silver locks, which, to a heart less depraved than his, would have been an invulnerable shield to the venerable owner.

Agonized by a sight which even surpassed his belief, much as he had already learnt, the friend of lord Malcolm could bear no more; he rushed forward, and seized the sacrilegious arm, ere it had, by an added degradation to the sufferer, accumulated his own portion of that denunciation awarded to those who shall dare to raise their hand against a parent.

“Rash man!” he exclaimed, arresting the blow, “is there nothing in that miserable form before you to awaken compunction in so young a heart as thine for such a violation of every duty? Look at him, and tremble for what, but for me, you would have done. This instant unhand him—tell me where he is to be conveyed, and I will myself conduct him thither.”

Convulsed

Convulsed with rage and astonishment at an interference so unexpected, Sinclair impatiently exclaimed—"And who, sir, are you, that dare to violate the rights of hospitality, and thus meanly steal into the interior of a family to scrutinize its movements? The afflictions of lord Malcolm's are not to be blazoned to the eye of every stranger, whom the humanity of his relations have brought under his roof."

"Neither must you, young man, profane the word, after thus trampling on its sacred dictates. Come, my lord," he said, disregarding the rage of Sinclair, and turning to his friend, "will you not go with me to your own room?"

"No, no!" he exclaimed, endeavouring to withdraw his hand, which the stranger had taken—"the chain—the whips are there! I dare not go."

"'Tis false!" said Sinclair—"Had either been used, you might have been better; but my false indulgence——"

“ Was manifest in your late action,” said his guest, with a look of contempt. “ However, if you will go with me,” he continued, addressing lord Malcolm, “ I will conduct you to an apartment where there are neither chains nor whips, and where you will find Jessy.”

Clasping his hands with a kind of infantine impatience, he replied—“ Will you indeed take me to her? Let us go then;” and he was moving onward, when Sinclair exclaimed—“ By Heavens! I will not be thus treated in my own house, and that by a man I know not. Tell me, sir, who you are, and by what right you presume thus to wrest lord Malcolm from the protection of his family?”

“ Not from his family,” returned the stranger, “ but from you, who have forfeited every right which, as a relative, you might have claimed to that office.”

“ 'Tis past endurance,” said Sinclair. “ *This*, wretch,” turning to the servant,
“ is

“is your work. But summon my mother, and she shall decide if a stranger or her son is to be master of this house.”

At that moment, not only lady Madeline, but, to his utter dismay, Mrs. Duncannon and several of the domestics, appeared in sight, brought thither by the report of Mary, who, without explaining what she had seen pass from one of the apartments, had entreated them to go to the gallery where lord Malcolm then was, calling for Jessy, whom he determined to see before he would return to his own room.

Her ladyship, believing in that case he must be quite sensible, and Mrs. Duncannon, impatient to judge for herself, eagerly followed Mary. But terrified by the appearance of her father, and still more as she gazed with astonishment on the enraged countenance of her son, lady Madeline burst into tears, and clung for support to the arm of Mrs. Duncannon, who, little less surprised, waited in si-

lence for an explanation of the scene before her ; when Sinclair, addressing her ladyship, said, in a voice choked by passion—" Is it your pleasure, madam, that this person, a stranger, whom we know not, and who has hitherto meanly concealed even his name, should become the future protector of lord Malcolm, for such he dares to assert is his intention? Perhaps in your presence he will learn the respect due to lady Madeline Sinclair, though he has presumed to insult her son, as yet with impunity. But he will not be always as well guarded," he added, darting a furious look at Mrs. Duncannon.

" I shall, nevertheless," said the stranger, " dare, even in the presence of lady Madeline, to assert that from this hour I consider his lordship as entitled to my sole protection."

" And once more I demand your authority for such arrogance," returned Sinclair, interrupting him.

" By

“ By the rights of early and long-tried friendship—by the feelings of humanity, which you have renounced. My name,” continued the stranger, mildly, “ is Ainsley—*perhaps* you have heard it before ?”

Never had it sounded so awfully in the ears of Frederick—never was sound so welcome to Mrs. Duncannon ; but conflicting sensations had rendered the weak mind of lady Madeline incapable of assimilating one idea, and she continued a silent spectator ; when Sinclair again repeated—“ And at whose instigation has Mr. Ainsley presumed to practise this duplicity in my family ? By whose authority dare he thus wrest the reins of government from my hand ?”

“ I came,” he returned, calmly, “ at the request of a dying penitent—the ill-fated Leopold ; and I derive my authority for acting as I now do, from him

whose power supersedes yours—the son and lawful heir of lord Malcolm.”

“ ’Tis false as hell !” vociferated Sinclair—“ His lordship has no son : the letter which proved his death reduced lord Malcolm to insanity, and I am not thus easily imposed upon. Ainsley, the friend of lord Malcolm, would have come openly, and in his own character, to the castle, not have thus stolen into it without a name, when he owned one that must have ensured him a welcome.”

“ Perhaps not,” Mr. Ainsley coolly replied ; “ but of that we will talk hereafter. Tell me, lady Madeline, have I your permission, for I would obtain it, to take lord Malcolm under my care for the present ? This is not a place for the explanations which must of necessity follow, and I am anxious to take upon me a trust for which I hold myself responsible both to you and my friend.”

“ Tell

“ Tell me,” she impatiently said, “ is that friend indeed my brother? Surely you cannot deceive me—tell me only that he lives, and Frederick will believe it.”

“ He does, madam,” was the reply. “ But having conducted lord Malcolm for a few minutes to my own apartment, for he will not return to that he occupied, I shall wait your pleasure for the farther communications so important to your family.”

“ 'Tis well, madam!” exclaimed Sinclair; “ for my presence you can have no further occasion. May you as bitterly curse the events of this day as I do the hour which gave me so weak a mother!”

Lady Madeline heard no more—every sense was annihilated by the import of words so dreadful, and she instantly fainted in the arms of Mrs. Duncannon, who, anxious as she was to remain with Mr. Ainsley, could not consign her to the care of servants, therefore accompa-

nied her, when somewhat recovered, to her apartment, where she sent instantly for Jessy, who, unconscious of what was passing, had been reading in the library. So much were her friend's feelings agitated by the scene she had just witnessed, that she scarcely knew where to begin the recital of events so important to her favourite, yet it was requisite she should be immediately made acquainted with the whole; and while Jessy, in breathless ecstacy, listened to the assurance that her father yet lived, and lady Madeline, throwing her arms around her, wept in agony of mingled joy and sorrow upon her affectionate bosom, a note from Mr. Ainsley was delivered to Mrs. Duncannon, in the contents of which she was deeply interested:

“ After what has already passed, my dear madam, you must be prepared

pared to hear still more, and I have much to communicate ; but my dear unfortunate friend, rendered more dear than ever by his present distressing state, must be the first consideration.

“ I have already entered upon my task of attending him—would I had done so sooner ! but I am willing to adopt your creed, and will not despair. Gentleness, I can see, may effect much, but I must also call in aid, which I have discovered will be more effectual than all the assiduities of friendship. Lord Malcolm’s mind, disordered as it is, appears wholly engrossed by one favourite object—Shall we then withhold the attainment of a comfort that may speak peace to his afflicted soul ? Will you not allow the amiable Jessy to resume the tender office of ‘ administering to a mind diseased ?’ She alone is the physician that can do so. With entreaties only an adamant heart could resist, he implores me to find her—calls on her

to return to the lost Malcolm. Say then, will you not allow him once more to see her? Much depends on the experiment. I have fancied that by pursuing a different course to what he has of late, I too well know, been accustomed, that a partial restoration of his senses may be effected. Will you not, then, accompany your *protégée*? for I need your excellent advice, but cannot, for many reasons, leave my charge. Entreat lady Madeline to exert all her fortitude, since she will have occasion for it—tell her that, although nature revolts against the lenity, the honour of her *son* shall be safe in the keeping of him, who is not less *her* friend than that of her father and brother.

“Yours, most truly,

“AINSLEY.”

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.
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HER fondest wishes thus anticipated, Jessy eagerly entreated Mrs. Duncan-  
non to accompany her to lord Malcolm,  
while her friend, no less interested,  
having, with her usual influence over  
lady Madeline, reasoned her into a con-  
viction that a new scene of happiness  
was about to dawn upon her hitherto  
uncomfortable life, and that the restora-  
tion of a beloved brother, if not the  
recovery of lord Malcolm's health, would  
render her future years all that her most  
sanguine wishes could expect, she left  
her, with a promise of returning, the  
instant she had obtained the desired in-  
formation from Mr. Ainsley, and which,

by the tenor of his note, she was warranted to expect.

But in the dream of future felicity which now engrossed all her ladyship's ideas, and the confusion which such a rapid succession of events had caused in her mind, a hideous phantom arose, which at once created a revolutionary kind of horror, that again suspended every faculty: she endeavoured to assimilate the mysterious words in the note—that the honour of her son, though nature revolted against the lenity, should be safe in the keeping of her father and brother's friend. With the subsequent actions, and still more dreadful sentence Frederick had uttered, of what had he been guilty that rendered concealment necessary? And what had she herself done, or was in danger of doing, to merit the dreadful denunciation which yet vibrated on her aching senses?

At that instant, the fond hope of clasping a long-lost brother to her affectionate heart—

heart—of seeing her wishes respecting Jessy realized, yielded to the more powerful impulse of maternal affection, since, in the interesting group, it threatened to exclude the first and most idolized object of her earthly happiness. But suspense was torture insufferable, and she sent instantly for Sinclair, to explain what now appeared the most mysterious part of the whole transaction; but her messenger returned without him—Mr. Sinclair had walked out; and lady Madeline was again left to her own painful reflections, which every hour became more poignant, and the period of Mrs. Duncannon's absence, from her own restless anxiety, apparently more tedious. But the sweet smile of complacency which every feature wore on her re-entering the room, promised lady Madeline some relief, and once more every idea of hope and joy rallied round the welcome herald, who related, as briefly as possible, the result of her interview

terview with Mr. Ainsley, than which (to herself) nothing could have been more satisfactory.

Of his early friend, lord Malcolm had lost all trace, and beheld him only as the good Samaritan, who had rescued him from a power of which, in his most distempered moments, he was but too sensible. The name and presence of Mrs. Duncannon awakened no recollection that either had ever been familiar to him ; but no sooner had his hitherto vacant eyes rested on the intelligent features of the sweet Jessy, and her extended hands clasped his with fervour, as she tenderly inquired after his health, than tears rushed to his eyes. Eagerly drawing her towards him, he laid his head on her shoulder, and for some minutes wept in agony, without speaking; nor was the expressive silence interrupted either by Mr. Ainsley or Mrs. Duncannon ; for the former, anxiously anticipating the result of this interview,

attentively



attentively watched the progress of lord Malcolm's feelings, and the latter, as she gazed with heartfelt commiseration on the altered person of his lordship, could not exculpate Sinclair from the charge of having, to his past misdeeds, added the unnatural one of improper treatment to his venerable and afflicted relative; and as she beheld him thus bereft of sense, her thoughts involuntarily recurred to the cause Frederick had assigned for his privation of reason—the letter which had, he said, confirmed his son's death. Of this letter she had never before heard the slightest intimation, and the studied concealment of a circumstance in which the whole were so deeply interested appeared strangely mysterious.

His overcharged heart relieved by the tears he had so copiously shed, and which were the first since his derangement, lord Malcolm raised his head, and fixing his eyes steadfastly on the pitying  
face

face turned towards him, said—"Tell me, Jessy, dear kind girl, tell me where you have been so long? and promise never, never to leave me again."

Delightful expectation lightened the bosom of friendship—there was consistency in the appeal to Jessy, and Mr. Ainsley, without daring to breathe, watched the varying emotions of his lordship's features.

Jessy fondly assured him she was come to be his constant nurse, while he would permit her to remain near him, but prudently forbore to mention the motives of her absence, which she now no less regretted than the poor sufferer, who continued still holding her hand, as if doubtful of her promise.

"I have been very ill, and my head," he added, putting his hand to it, "my head is still bad—a strange dream presses on it. I cannot think but if you will stay it will wear off, for you will not let them terrify me. See," he continued, shewing

shewing her his wrist, "they did this when I but tried to go in search of you. Oh! it was that cruel chain that made me mad! Don't be frightened," he said, seeing her shudder as she looked upon him, "I am not mad now, and shall be quite well if you keep that man away. But who is that?" pointing to Mr. Ainsley, "for now I remember, he first saved me, and promised to bring you to me."

Fearful he would exhaust himself too much, Mr. Ainsley approached, saying—"As I have fulfilled that promise, my lord, you will surely believe I am your friend too, and that I will assist Jessy in keeping every person away whom you do not wish to see."

"Thank you," he said, with much quickness.

But, as if still believing his only security was in Jessy's protection, he again took her hand in his, while Mr. Ainsley continued—"If you will endeavour to  
compose

compose yourself, nothing will induce Jessy to leave you; but you have been greatly agitated, and must endeavour to obtain a little rest, otherwise I must take Jessy away."

"Oh, I will do any thing you wish me!" he said, trembling; "but I cannot sleep, for then——"

Reading his thoughts by the agitated looks he turned to Jessy, Mr. Ainsley said, with much firmness—"Your lordship cannot think I would deceive you, after bringing this sweet girl, as I promised you to do. But if you wish her to remain, it can only be on condition that you do what I request of you; and I now entreat that you will lie down."

Jessy added her entreaties, on a promise of watching by him; and with passive submission he complied; after taking a draught which Mr. Ainsley had previously prepared for him, and Jessy as strongly recommended.

The opium, which his friend had  
deemed

deemed necessary after the agitation of spirits into which he had been thrown, was not long in operating on his weakened frame. For some time he continued to strain his heavy eyes, that he might gaze on his charming nurse, whose hand was still clasped in his, as she sat beside him. But nature at length yielded to the more powerful medicine, and he sunk into a gentle sleep, during which Mr. Ainsley, seating himself between Jessy and Mrs. Duncannon, briefly related the cause of his visit to the north, "which," he said, "I hardly now need inform you was to have terminated at Tantallan Castle, although the wonder-working hand of Providence had arranged my introduction in a manner widely different from what I had myself intended. As past events," he continued, "must be fully explained at a future season, and that in the presence of lady Madeline, I shall at present pass

on

on to those most nearly connected with the explanations I am so desirous to give you. And first, let me ask if you are prepared to see an old friend, whose impatience to see you both has been painfully restrained?"

"I have already, as you know," said Mrs. Duncannon, smiling, "seen the faithful creature to whom you allude, and can assure you, only the state in which I found him, and my own delicacy, could have suppressed my eager desire to penetrate a mystery to which I had then no clue, for there are no circumstances under which Donald and I could meet as strangers."

"Thus prepared, then," returned Mr. Ainsley, "I have only, my dear madam, to assert my own conviction, with that you have so long, and with much reason, been justified in supporting, that Jessy, the supposed child of the good Donald, and the adopted one of the generous  
Mrs.



Mrs. Duncannon, is the granddaughter of lord Malcolm, the only surviving child of his hitherto unfortunate son."

Tears of grateful joy glistened in the eyes of Jessy at this avowal, and in an impatient, though low voice, she entreated him to say, if the stranger at the warden's was really her father?

Mr. Ainsley answered in the affirmative; and, for the first time, she felt the cruel restraint which prevented her flying to behold the being she had so long, though unknown, cherished in her ever-ardent imagination; and, bursting into tears, she said—"Ought I for a moment to remain here, when that father is attended by strangers only?"

Fearful his judicious and humane plan would be frustrated by her eagerness to see his friend, Mr. Ainsley replied—"I can allow every thing for the generous impatience so natural to a heart like yours. But tell me, my sweet girl, if, assured as your father already is, not  
only

only of your being so near him, but of all that concerns you, he can with manly fortitude wait until circumstances render the interview, no less desired by himself, more prudent than at this moment it would be, is nothing due from yourself to promote his future comfort?"

Jessy thought no sacrifice too great.

"Remain, then, I entreat you," he returned, "at least for a few hours, with my unhappy friend: if in that time no dawning symptom of reason should stimulate my own hopes, I will no longer enforce my wish, and other measures for his restoration must be resorted to. But I am sanguine that the accomplishment of his desire in seeing you, the tears he has shed, and which in his state are so desirable, together with a mode of treatment so different to Mr. Sinclair's, will effect much in our favour; but all will be confirmed by the state which this sleep leaves him in, and I dare not risk his finding you absent, for that  
would

would be at once to destroy all his confidence in us, and such a step might be fatal."

Mrs. Duncannon perfectly agreed with him; and the probability of seeing his lordship restored to reason, capable of knowing and pardoning his banished child, was an idea so ecstatic to Jessy, that she could scarcely attend to the account Mr. Ainsley was still giving Mrs. Duncannon of Donald's narrative.

He continued—"I shall here say nothing, for he will be better pleased to give it in his own way; neither is the recital of events, no less strange, and which have succeeded each other in the destiny of my friend for the last eighteen years, of importance to the present conference. Suffice it to say, I was scarcely in possession of a letter penned by the late unfortunate servant of lord Malcolm, the purport of which I could not at that time fully comprehend, than both became residents under my roof—a circumstance

stance altogether so unexpected, so unlooked-for, that I could scarcely credit my own belief, for years had intervened since all trace of the persecuted Malcolm had been lost to me, and in pity for him I had stifled every sentiment of friendship for the father, whom I did not hesitate to pronounce unjust. Judge, then, my feelings, when having in some degree recovered my surprise, and in part accustomed myself to his emaciated figure, but the faded remains of the once elegant and blooming Alphonso, he presented Donald to me as the preserver of his child, whom he averred to be living, and, in all probability, under his father's roof.

“ But, as suddenly recollecting himself, he exclaimed, in an agony—‘ If that villain—Oh, Ainsley, I dare not think what at this moment may be her fate! Fly to Tantallan Castle—you are privileged to enter doors for ever closed upon the wretched Malcolm !—but, as you  
would

would spare my senses, and speak comfort to my last hours, return not, I charge you, without my Jessy. Lord Malcolm cannot—the villain Sinclair dare not, withhold from an unhappy expiring father his soul's last treasure. But think not I shall remain here—I will accompany you to Scotland; the good Donald must also go—his evidence of my child's identity will strengthen your demand for her restoration; and let Madeline beware how she retains her to gratify the unworthy son to whom she is, I find, mother. In the neighbourhood, I shall await the result of your visit, when we must together seek the residence of an angel, whose affection for my Jessy (honoured for ever be her name!) rescued my child from ignorance, and has rendered her the reflected image of her own goodness; for in Donald's artless account of both, I am prepared to find her what a daughter of Adela ought to be.'

“ It was now,” said Mr. Ainsley, “ my turn to communicate the contents of my letter, which Donald could better decipher than myself; and satisfied that his child was still in safety, the anxious father became impatient for our commencing the intended journey; but the wretched state of his own health, which had not enabled him to surmount the fatigues of a long voyage, and the still more alarming situation of a friend, but for whose humane exertions he would never have been restored to us, and who, on his arrival in London, had been suddenly attacked by a most dangerous fever, which for some time baffled his medical attendants, rendered our doing so impossible; for, great as was the struggle between friendship and affection, the ties which bound him to his friend were too powerful to be resisted; nor was it until the physicians had pronounced him out of danger, that we prepared for our departure, when, as I before said, they  
fatally



fatally proposed the voyage, as less fatiguing to my friend, whom they declared incapable of performing a journey of so many hundred miles by land. With the termination of that voyage, so nearly destructive to the whole of us, you are sufficiently acquainted; but my own feelings, when, on recovering my senses, I found myself under lord Malcolm's roof, and separated from my friend, could only be surpassed by the dreadful intelligence which reached me of his situation. Your goodness, madam, alone mitigated their severity, and enabled me to visit him much sooner than I expected; but knowing the distress, which, if sensible, this derangement of all our plans would plunge him into, and fearing the honest Donald, thrown off his guard, might make a premature discovery of our persons, I was, you may believe, anxious to satisfy both as soon as possible.

“ In the humane preserver of my poor  
K 2 friend,

friend, the brave Glendairn, I found an intelligent creature, whose knowledge of the house of Malcolm warranted my expecting every information requisite for our future proceedings; and having gathered from my first questions sufficient to awaken the most painful curiosity to learn more, I determined on passing the night at the warden's, on pretence of sitting up with Malcolm, during which, a scene of villany, injustice, and cruelty, was revealed to my astonished ear, far exceeding what I was in part prepared to expect, and I returned to the castle, deeply ruminating in my own mind the measures I ought to adopt, and which I determined should be instantly carried into effect by a candid avowal of my name and business in the north, but was still hesitating if the discovery I had to make should be in confidence to lady Madeline, or in the presence of the base unnatural wretch her son. With the sequel you are partly acquainted.

“ Forgetting

“ Forgetting I was yet on sufferance only, as a stranger in the castle, I had unconsciously wandered through the well-remembered gallery, when lord Malcolm, rushing from his apartment, threw himself frantically on my protection, as if conscious, even in insanity, that Ainsley was his friend. His failings are no longer remembered, and I will protect him until Alphonso is recovered, nor leave him till I have effected the reconciliation so essential to them both. For what can more clearly prove the father’s feelings than the state to which they have reduced him? Did not Mr. Sinclair say it was the result of a letter which announced his son’s death?”

“ He did,” said Mrs. Duncannon; “ and yet of this letter——”

“ And by this time,” returned Mr. Ainsley, “ he, no doubt, repents the hasty assertion, prompted by the violence of passion and resentment; for too well he knows it was a vile fabrication of his

own—a false representation, to aid his unnatural and mercenary ambition; but it will yet recoil on his own guilty head. His infatuated accomplice, the unfortunate and misguided Leopold, I have no doubt fell a sacrifice to his vile machinations; and how he is to answer to my friend for his treatment of lord Malcolm, I know not; that it has been inhuman I am satisfied; but, for his mother's sake, as much as possible must be suppressed. To his uncle he will have to render an account that may ill suit his high spirit; but that will be an after consideration. In the meantime, the restoration of my friend's health, and the recovery of lord Malcolm's reason, are far more important points; and I will dare to trust, that, assisted by your excellent advice, neither are impossible.

“ But as the events of this day have terminated so differently to what I had foreseen, and that my lengthened absence will become a subject of inquietude  
to

to my friend, may I trespass upon your goodness with a request that you will repeat your visit to him, and explain, as far as you may think advisable, the important occurrences of the morning? He is already acquainted with your residence in the castle, and impatiently anticipates the moment when his grateful heart will be at liberty to acknowledge his many obligations for your disinterested goodness to his child; and need I add how impatiently he must desire to clasp that child, so deserving of affection, to his paternal heart? Bereft of all his soul treasured on earth—an outcast from his paternal home, and every kindred tie, scarcely can his frame, weakened by so many painful trials—his manly heart, bowed to the earth by unmerited sorrow, bear up against the excessive tide of joy that has at once burst upon him; for, in the recovery of his daughter, he believes that fate, weary

of persecuting him, will yet restore him to every forfeited blessing."

"And it will!" Jessy emphatically exclaimed—"Hasten, my ever dear madam, to this beloved parent, and convince him, that impelled by duty, and the fond hope of seeing a change in lord Malcolm's disorder, I wait only until the happy intelligence I may have to communicate shall render his Jessy more worthy the blessing she implores from a father's lips. I need not entreat you to watch over his valued health, or to use every means for his recovery—*that* the benevolence of your own heart will prompt you to do; and to my past debt of gratitude I shall owe you the still greater one of his restoration."

Equally charmed with her affectionate solicitude, Mrs. Duncannon promised to set out for the warden's as soon as she had related the subject of her conference to lady Madeline, not less stimulated by her  
her



her humane anxiety for the good Donald than his present master, while Mr. Ainsley, equally solicitous for the result of his lordship's favourable sleep, remained with Jessy, to whom he felt every instant more attached.

## CHAPTER VII.

//////////

LORD Malcolm's sleep had been perfectly composed for more than two hours, at the end of which time he raised his eyes, and fixed them with an inquiring look upon Jessy's face; they then wandered to her companion, but their expression evidently changed to surprise. He then covered them with his hand; and for some minutes remained silent, when he again withdrew it, and, in a hesitating voice, pronounced Jessy's name.

She leaned tenderly forward, and said—“ I am here, my lord.”

“ Is it possible?” he replied—“ I have often called you, but it was only in my dreams you came. Surely I do not sleep now; and you are really here? Perhaps, then——” and again he looked at Mr. Ainsley—“ No! it must be that I still dream, for Ainsley, like all the world, has forgotten the wretched Malcolm!” His voice faltered as he continued—“ And yet, ’tis so like—Why does it not speak?”

Scarcely less affected, Mr. Ainsley drew near his bed, and taking his trembling hand, replied—“ Had Ainsley known your situation, my lord, not all the world could have kept him from you.”

Melted to more than woman’s weakness, his lordship wept aloud, as he raised his hand to his lips, and pressed it with fervour—“ ’Tis kind,” he said, “ and I am grateful for your goodness.

But

But I am a poor weak creature—sorrow has altered me, Ainsley. A little longer, and your kindness would have come too late. Jessy, too, poor girl! has been long away, but she will now close my eyes!”

It required all Mr. Ainsley’s firmness to support the scene. Jessy was incapable of speaking, and averted, as much as possible, her streaming eyes, as he continued, in a languid voice, still looking at his friend—“ Ainsley, this coat ill suits the friendship you professed for my poor boy—’tis early days, methinks, to lay aside your mourning. Your letter bespoke more love for Alphonso when it stabbed his wretched father! But I forgave you, for I deserved reproach——”

“ Not from Ainsley,” said his impatient friend, interrupting him; “ I wrote no letter, my lord, for I had better news, and came myself to bring it: I come to speak only comfort—not reproaches;

and if you will be calm, I have much to tell you."

"You were not wont to deceive me," said his lordship; "but did I see no letter? was that also a fearful dream? No—impossible! The wretch who was always with me, and whom I knew not, for ever told me I had no child. Why then deceive me?"

"But they told you also, Jessy was gone, yet I have brought her to you; and if I pledge my sacred honour that your son is still living, will you not believe Ainsley, who never yet deceived you?"

"I will, I will!" he replied, with trembling eagerness; "but I must instantly see him—my soul can only linger here till he has pardoned his guilty father! See you not, Ainsley, that I am dying?"

Horror-struck by the assertion, so awfully pronounced, Jessy involuntarily started from her seat; but a look from

Mr.

Mr. Ainsley shewed her the necessity of assuming composure, and kneeling by his bedside, she said, in the gentlest accents—"Indeed, my lord, you are much better than you were; and now that Mr. Ainsley is come, you will try to live for Jessy's sake,"—for my father's, she would have added, but suppressing the ecstatic feeling, continued—"for lady Madeline and your son."

"Why then," he said, with an emotion bordering on resentment, "have I been so long kept in ignorance? If my life was of consequence to any one, why have I been thus deserted by those who might have saved me? abused, insulted by a stranger! Oh, Ainsley, the chain has entered into my soul!—I am no longer the haughty Malcolm you once knew. Subdued, heart-broken, I am hastening to my grave!—The blow is struck—'tis too late. Not even Jessy, long my only comfort, can now bid me live!"

Mr.

Mr. Ainsley was too sensible of the change, which placed the danger of his friend in a questionable light, and had immediate recourse to the restoratives best calculated to support his sinking frame, while he dispatched a servant for the nearest medical assistance. Exhausted by the exertion, to which he was unequal, his lordship sunk into a stupor resembling sleep; and at the desire of Mr. Ainsley, Jessy left his apartment for a few minutes, to visit lady Madeline.

On her arrival at the warden's, Mrs. Duncannon, satisfied from the accounts of Donald that he was recovering, and deeming it advisable to postpone their interview for the present, proceeded first to his master's chamber, whom she found seated in an easy-chair, impatiently waiting her arrival. He looked earnestly in her face, as if in expectation of some important information; but the sweet serenity which marked it soon communicated



nicated itself to his more perturbed feelings, and enabled him, after the usual compliments of the day, to hear a partial account of the events which had taken place at the castle previous to her leaving it.

“ So fully satisfied of the safety of a long-lost daughter, and the extent of my obligations to you, my dear madam,” he said, respectfully taking her hand, “ the first impulse of my heart was to acknowledge my debt of gratitude ; but as you have already learnt the particulars of my situation from my revered friend, that subject, with many others you have yet to be made acquainted with, must stand over to a more favourable opportunity.

“ But my father ? Tell me, I conjure you, for on your opinion I dare rely with confidence, is it possible his intellects are so much injured, that the intercession of the worthy Ainsley for his allowing me an interview will be un-  
availing ?

availing? Can he indeed not be made sensible, that the penitent, sorrowing, and banished Alphonso, once the object of his dearest affection, implores his forgiveness?"

Mrs. Duncannon, who had dwelt as lightly as possible on lord Malcolm's derangement, was surprised at his being so well informed of it; but this was explained by his saying, that from the son of lady Madeline, who had that morning visited him, he had been given to understand his lordship's mental faculties, weakened by the secluded life he had for some time led, had eventually terminated in a total deprivation of his reason; that he was never seen by any part of his family, himself excepted, whom he scarcely ever allowed to leave him, on a supposition that he was only safe while he remained in his room—a confinement which, the young man added, as it contributed so much to his lordship's comfort, he never regretted, but  
when,

when, as in the present instance, it precluded the possibility of his paying that attention to any guest which hospitality and the consequence of their family demanded.

“Attentive only to the melancholy account of my father’s health, I believe I did not make the expected return to his solicitation that I would remove to the castle the instant my health admitted of my doing so; for, roused from my reverie by some remark he made, I fancied, as raising my eyes, I could perceive an expression of displeasure in his, for which I could in no other way account, and he left me rather, I thought, abruptly.

“I never,” continued the uncle of Sinclair, “knew his father, therefore he may resemble him; but unacquainted with his relationship to my dear Madeline, I should never have suspected him to be a descendant of the house of Malcolm;

colm; he may however improve upon a better acquaintance, for which, I believe, he is at present but little prepared."

Mrs. Duncannon thought otherwise; but she had scarcely assured him that she trusted the situation of lord Malcolm, though precarious, still left room for hope—that by taking proper methods to explain the unexpected events in his family, in his more lucid moments, that a material change might be effected, when a servant from the castle requested to speak with her in an outer room; on her entering which, Carlo, who waited her arrival, begged, in Mr. Ainsley's name, she would return, as soon as she possibly could without alarming the sick gentleman, for that nothing could exceed the confusion into which the whole family had been thrown by the state Mr. Sinclair was brought home in: he had been, the man said, in a kind of fit, during which he had struggled so violently,

violently, that the doctor said he must have burst a blood-vessel, and it was expected he would bleed to death; that lady Madeline had been taken out of his room quite senseless; and his lordship was at that time so bad, Mr. Ainsley could not leave him a moment.

The last account gave Mrs. Duncannon much uneasiness: the probable death of Sinclair appeared to her a relief for his family; for lady Madeline she felt sincere commiseration; but there was nothing she would not have done to preserve the life of lord Malcolm, at least until a perfect reconciliation had been effected with his son; and of whom, having said Mr. Ainsley requested to see her, "probably," she added, with assumed composure, "in consequence of some change he may have perceived in his friend," she took a hasty leave, but not until she had assured him, at his own request, that Jessy should be the companion of her next visit.

All

All was, as Carlo had represented, tumult at the castle: Sinclair's natural and arrogant insolence, after the avowal of Mr. Ainsley's name, no longer promised him its wonted aid—it was the only name which had power to appal him; for strenuously as he persisted in a pretended disbelief of its reality, too well his guilty conscience convinced him such a being might exist, and to him a deadly enemy. A knowledge that lord Malcolm had burst his prison-doors was alone sufficient to alarm him; he had returned almost at the moment of his doing so, and with savage haste pursued his captive. Nothing could for him have been more untimely than the presence of the stranger in the gallery, through which he must pass; but the interference of that stranger aroused his resentment, nor was it until awed by the commanding coolness of Mr. Ainsley, in revealing himself, as he demanded the future charge of his lordship, that  
his



his haughty soul began to shrink from the dreaded surmise of what was yet to follow an explanation so totally unexpected, and he returned to his own room the prey of every malignant passion : a thousand times, as he paced it with uneven steps, he wished the howling blast, which threw a being so hateful to him on their shores, had consigned both vessel and crew to the fathomless deep ; a thousand times cursed his officious servants for preserving their lives ; and still more bitterly execrated Glendairn for the active part he had taken ; for it now occurred, as he threw himself wildly into a chair, that if indeed Alphonso lived, he was but too assuredly the emaciated creature whom he had so lately seen at the warden's ; and whose life, hanging, as it still appeared to do, upon the verge of eternity, might yet promise a succession to the title it was not possible he could long retain himself.

But in this calculation he had passed  
over

over the account which would be required of him, and for which he was even less prepared than for the discoveries already made. His own attendance on lord Malcolm warranted his believing that kindness and indulgence were the surest methods towards recovering his impaired reason; for of late symptoms of returning sensibility had often alarmed him; and his only alternative had been a repetition of severity, which never failed to humble the yet proud spirit of lord Malcolm, or some new inflicted terror, against which the yet weak and imbecile mind was not proof. But that disordered mind once more organized, and reason again strengthened to a sense of its wrongs, what was to be his own humiliating situation, when, abased, accused, and branded by those who, no longer dreading his power, were at liberty to reveal his past conduct to those who would become his prejudiced judges? There was agony in the thought.

For

For a length of time he remained motionless in his seat, and when summoned to attend his mother, sullenly said he was going out; but again distractedly paced the apartment, irresolute how to act, until suddenly recollecting himself, he flew in desperation to the room his lordship had been accustomed to occupy, to remove, while he had yet the power to do so, one damning proof of his inhumanity—the chain which had so often wrung the aged wrist of his victim, and, as he mournfully said, entered his lacerated heart; but neither chain nor whip met his eager sight.

Again foiled, he rung the bell, which was slowly answered by the servant, whose business alone it was to attend that apartment, and in whose care his lordship had been left. Furiously he demanded to know why he had left the room without securing the door, or indeed left it at all in his absence?

The man, with more resolution than  
he

he had been accustomed to assume, coolly replied—"That he wished to speak with Glendairn, and had not been absent more than a few minutes; to be sure he might have fastened the door, but his lordship had been so long used to his prison, he did not suppose he would think of attempting his escape."

Sensible, from the very tenor of this answer, of his own declining power, Sinclair, without appearing to notice the evasion, asked for the chain.

The man hesitated; and on his repeating the question, said he believed it had been taken away.

"By whom," vociferated Sinclair, "and by whose order?"

"As to that," he replied, "I believe he was not ordered by any person."

Rage and alarm now wrung every fibre, as he again demanded of whom he was speaking? and had he heard, as he expected to have done, that it was Mr. Ainsley, the latter would have predominated,

minated; but the former triumphed with savage resentment, as the hated name of Glendairn a second time vibrated in his ear; it gave rise to new sensations, and for a moment he stood aghast. "This then," he thought, "is no work of chance, and I am betrayed—an ignominious flight alone is left me. Fool that I was to procrastinate—but revenge is still in my power—I will yet wreak upon the base abettor of this scheme the deadly hate I bear him, before I conceal myself from the taunting insults which await me. A short time, and the haughty Ainsley will in vain strive to wrest from my power what death will stamp my legal claim to—for neither Malcolm nor his son are long for this world."

Frantically he snatched his hat, and from the castle proceeded to the warden's; but in the grounds, at a short distance from the house, met his evil genius, Glendairn, whose happy features, dilated by the promised revolution in

his lord's family, and proud of the share he had himself taken in it, stung him to the soul.—“Stop, sir,” said Sinclair, in an authoritative tone, as he approached him—“I have business with you.”

Glendairn halted.

“It should seem you have taken a very active part in the affairs of my family, and one that ill becomes your situation as a vassal of lord Malcolm's; and I now demand both your motives and authority before I proceed farther.”

“To the first,” replied Glendairn, undaunted by the question, “I am proud to assert, the veneration I bear my lord's family, and the fealty I owe his lordship, are the only motives which *could* govern me; they have long since taught me to feel for his unmerited sufferings, and determined me how to act when an opportunity offered.”

“And who, mighty Glendairn, are your advisers,” returned Sinclair, sarcastically,



castically, “ in a scheme which, know ye, I have yet discernment to see through, nor want the power to crush the vile impostors concerned in it? Lead me,” he continued, “ to this highly-favoured guest, with whom you are in league, and whom I will confute to your dismay. Who, tell me, does he say he is?”

“ The future lord of this wide domain,” said Glendairn, with studied coolness, “ whose claims not only I, but all our clan are sworn to support.”

“ It is false !” he vociferated, with increasing violence; “ the son of lord Malcolm would not have stolen thus dastardly upon his family—but I will unmask the hypocrite—On with me, and witness the failure of your well-concerted plans.”

Aware that the reduced state of his young lord rendered him unequal to an interview with the wretch from whom every insult was to be expected, and

anxious that whenever it did take place, Mr. Ainsley, from whom he had already received his directions, should be present, Glendairn, without any hesitation, said he had better defer his intended visit, at least for a short time, as he had but just left his young master in a fine sleep, which, as he had such bad nights, would be of service to him, therefore he must not be disturbed.

Foaming with rage at being thus repulsed, he dared Glendairn to dictate when he ought to obey—"To me only," he added, "you owe the fealty you are about to prostitute to your employers: a short time since, and you would have shrunk from the power you now defy."

"Never!" said the haughty Glendairn: "I have before asserted I could owe no fealty to a tyrant, and at that moment my power was superior to thine, for it was exerted in a just cause."

The agonized soul of Sinclair could bear no more—the events of that night  
rose

rose to his imagination, and in the disgraceful blow with which a vassal had levelled him to the ground, he traced the commencement of a train of humiliations which were too probably destined to follow. With the fury of unbridled desperation, he fastened upon the astonished Glendairn, who knowing the more than common strength which nerved his own sinewy arm, would not have expected the attack, from which, in the next moment, he emancipated himself, and continued to hold his gasping antagonist at arm's length with determined coolness.

“ Unhand me, villain !” he exclaimed, in a convulsive voice, as nature, struggling with the passion which had nearly dethroned reason, yielded to the unequal contest ; the livid paleness of his features was succeeded by a more terrific blackness, and he fell senseless to the ground.

Glendairn, alarmed by his situation,

was looking anxiously round for assistance, as he attempted to bare his neck to admit freer respiration, when two of the servants appeared in sight. Having explained the manner in which he had been seized, he assisted them in conveying him to the castle, which they reached at the instant the medical man summoned by Mr. Ainsley's order to attend lord Malcolm entered the gate.

For some minutes the wretched Sinclair shewed no signs of life; but they had scarcely conveyed him to his own apartment, when the hitherto torpid state of his frame was succeeded by the most violent struggles, and the utmost power of the attendants proved insufficient to combat the exertions he made, until streams of blood issued from his mouth and nostrils, his strained eyes rolled around, as if in search of some one not present, but the faculty of speech, although evidently sensible, was, from his situation, precluded.

“ It

“It is for lady Madeline he looks,” said one of the servants, as he darted from the room to acquaint her with what had passed, and the state of her wretched son.

Alive only to affection for him, as unpardonably boundless as his own violent passion, she flew to his chamber to behold a sight from which shuddering nature would have recoiled under any character—that of the mother was least capable of sustaining it; and in a situation little less pitiable than was that of the object of her fondest solieitude, she was reconducted to her own apartment, before she had felt the dying pressure of the hand extended towards her. While motionless in despair she gazed upon him, recalled to a fresh sense of his past ingratitude to such a mother by her apparent agony, the dreadful chaos of his mind became visible in every agitated feature. At that instant Mrs. Duncan-

his bed, but the benign aspect which had so often spoke comfort to the fleeting soul, about to recede from its earthly tenement, peace to the penitent, and even to the guilty hope, had no longer its talismanic power over the wretch before her; for in her he beheld, as he believed, the author of all his wrongs, and shut his eyes, as if to exclude a sight painful to them.

From the surgeon she learnt that all prospect of his surviving even for an hour was hopeless; he obstinately resisted all assistance, and as strenuously refused whatever was prescribed for his relief. But if his external appearance, while it excited horror in the spectators, awakened commiseration for his bodily sufferings, evinced by the large drops which fell from his contracted brows, and stood upon the stiffened hands, as they wildly grasped the bed-clothes, how much more did his internal struggles demand the soothing voice of pity! for  
there



there the conflict was indeed terrible: the deserted Mary, the self-destroyed Leopold, and the aged form of lord Malcolm, vainly imploring that mercy he had so often withheld, passed in swift succession, mingled with a tenderness for his mother which until now he had never felt; and a sense of her misery forced the half-repenting tear to his burning eyes. But the horrors of approaching death left him no time to arrange one confused idea; and the last convulsive sigh which severed the mortal part from that which was hereafter to answer for the commission of *many* bad deeds, and the omission of *every* good and laudable one, bespoke neither contrition for the past, nor hope of the future.

To the unwearied assiduities of Mrs. Duncannon, her persuasive arguments, and kindest sympathy, was lady Madeline wholly indebted for the returning health and spirits which enabled her at  
the

the end of some days to surmount, in part, the trial under which, but for such a friend, she must inevitably have sunk. During that period lord Malcolm had remained in a state which, though it precluded all hopes of his ever being restored to health, enabled him to prepare for the awful change about to take place. His senses had gradually returned, and the happy conviction of his son's existence, revealed in the most guarded manner by his friend, conveyed such comfort to his oppressed heart, that no time was lost by the disinterested Ainsley in effecting the desired reconciliation, which, followed by the discovery of Jessy's relationship to him, so exhilarated his exhausted frame, as to recal for a short period the fast-receding spirit, and promise his anxiously-expecting children an addition to their present happiness, in the preservation of a life so valued by each; but the prospect so favourable to their wishes was transient: he had been permitted

permitted to clasp his banished child to his throbbing breast—to reinstate him in his injured rights—to cancel every former curse by the most fervent blessings—and to know that his beloved Jessy would be amply repaid for her affectionate attentions to him, both by the plaudits of her own heart, and the ample fortune he had given her; the death of Sinclair had also been explained to him, and with a kindness to which from her father's lips she had never been accustomed, he entreated lady Madeline not to indulge unavailing grief, but gratefully enjoying the unexpected blessings restored to her, to bow with submission to the dispensation which might eventually prove a real mercy. And no less grateful to Mrs. Duncannon for such repeated instances of her strong attachment to his family, he gazed on each by turns, with sensations of pleasure that overpowered those which so forcibly reminded him of an  
approaching

approaching period, when his eyes would no longer rest with rapture on the interesting group, among whom Ainsley, his early friend, and the benefactor of his child, was a prominent character; but as if sufficiently gratified by seeing them all once more beneath his paternal roof, his memory either was so much weakened by his late derangement, or become so totally indifferent to every thing but their presence, that he had never once inquired by what circumstances all had been effected; nor had the death of Sinclair, together with lady Madeline's situation, left any opportunity for Mrs. Duncannon to enter upon the subject of these inquiries, which on Jessy's account she was so desirous of doing; for although the faithful Donald was become an inmate of the castle, the particulars of his eventful tale were by mutual consent deferred until some degree of composure was restored to the family, and which was not the case

case until the last sad rites were performed over the remains of lord Malcolm, when deposited in the family vault.

The emaciated form and altered countenance of his once blooming and beloved Alphonso had, for the first few days after his removal to the castle, appeared both to shock and interest him; but although reason still kept its throne, a degree of apathy imperceptibly weakened all his faculties; and so gradual was the decay of nature, so calm the soul's transit, as to inspire but one sensation in the breast of those who witnessed the closing scene: it was—"That their last end might be like his."

END OF VOL. III.

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